

Indian Book Chronicle

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S Y Govindarajan**

**Sarup Singh**

**F E Peters**

**George Nordgulen**

**B S Das**

**Nari Rustamji**

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**Role of Book Fairs**

**Family Relationships in  
Shakespeare and the Restoration  
Comedy of Manners**

**Children of Abraham**

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# Indian Book Chronicle

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## Role of Book Fairs

It must be said with a certain measure of satisfaction that while the system of distribution of books otherwise continues to be unsatisfactory, there has been some initiative taken in another area. From February 4, 1984 begins the Sixth World Book Fair at Delhi. Book Fairs at Delhi are arranged every two years. During the year that the Book Fair is not arranged at Delhi, it is arranged in some other important city. In other words, there is a certain amount of rotation. Book Fairs alternate between Delhi and in one of the other important cities in the country.

What do the Book Fairs accomplish? By and large they bring those potential readers to the Fair who otherwise have no access to book shops or do not feel interested enough to visit them. Apart from other things, Book Fairs are also something of a spectacle. People like to visit them because it provides them a kind of outing. If on that outing they can also incidentally look at new titles, and sometimes not so new, it is a bonus. Every Book Fair is preceded by a certain measure of publicity. This attracts people. And when visitors come they find not only a few books confined to one bookshop but an abundance of them. There are hundreds of booksellers, each one of them displaying his wares and this then becomes something of a social occasion as well.

The credit for this happy development must go both to the National Book Trust (NBT) and the book trade. The NBT provides the funding and the occasion for it and the booksellers welcome the opportunity and display their books.

Books however are now so expensive that an average reader finds it difficult to dip his hands into his pocket. In more cases than not he feels like buying books which he cannot afford to buy. Even this state of dissatisfaction is a positive thing. Such a reader then looks for other avenues of access to books. Libraries are the obvious source though once in a while one can stumble upon the title one is looking for in a friend's house also.

As noted once earlier in these columns, it is the children whose requests cannot be refused. It is heartwarming to see parents going along with the children to these Fairs. When the children want to buy something the parents find it difficult to refuse them even though they have to sacrifice something else in order to buy the book or books that the children want to buy. The needs of the children must have priority and that is how it comes to pass, most often.

While Book Fairs are welcome for they serve to spread book consciousness, unless there is also regular follow up in respect of more and better located bookshops the trade will not profit in the measure it should. The only salvation of the book trade lies in better sales to libraries. Fortunately this time the UGC grants have been released at the right moment and the book trade can look forward to a bumper season.

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Editor



February 1, 1984

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## Insightful & Integrated

Sarup Singh

*Family Relationships in Shakespeare and the Restoration Comedy of Manners*  
pp. x+233, Oxford University Press, 1983, Rs. 90.00

Reviewed by Darshan Singh Maini

In seeking to study the whole range of familial relationships and the corresponding ethos and ethics both in Shakespeare and the Restoration Comedy of Manners, a critic is obliged to range over such vast and disparate territories as to cause concern in regard to the health and purity of the exercise. For, what's involved is not merely an intimate knowledge of the texts in question—a fairly challenging proposition in itself—but also more than a smattering of the contemporary sources relating to history, theology, folklore etc. And for achieving the desired effect, he has to press into service, what I feel free to call, the imagination of roving and relating.

If therefore, I try to see *Family Relationships in Shakespeare and the Restoration Comedy of Manners* by Sarup Singh as an insightful and integrated inquiry, it's to affirm the scholarly nature of the enterprise at the outset. Few value statements are made without recourse to the text and the tenet. There are not many radical departures from the established Shakespeare criticism in particular, whether we are considering the poet's views on women, marriage, love and sex, or his stance regarding the larger issues of man, nature and society in a changing world. However, Sarup Singh's perceptions have, on the whole, a freshness of statement and an ease of understanding.

### SHAKESPEARE'S AMBIVALENCE

To begin with the author examines the place of the family in the context of the Elizabethan world-view. The family *qua* family, we find, has a tremendous spiritual charge, and derives its energies from the Puritan's dialectic of precept and praxis. Added to it is the Tudor mystique of the father-king which promotes paternalism and patriarchalism as natural and eternal categories. The

combined force of all such factors is to invest the family with something of a divine halo after the fashion of 'the holy family'. A secular institution is thus, canonized. In Shakespeare such a view is not really as much propounded as subsumed in the dynamics of each individual play. For, it must be understood that Shakespeare seldom allowed any idea to violate his imagination, and assume a life apart from its human context. In other words, ideas in Shakespeare find their dramatic correlatives, and thus emerge as poetic *affects*, and not as cold categories.

Sarup Singh, I guess, means something of this kind when he encounters the celebrated Shakespearean ambiguity in this regard. He finds that while Shakespeare upholds the ideals of paternalism and patriarchalism as a matter of evolved continuities and received wisdom, he is fully aware of the new forces of individualism which are on the upswing, and which have their own *raison d'être*, if not their own virtue. It's somewhat surprising, however, that Sarup Singh does not go further into this problem and explore the larger ramifications that inevitably crop up in this context. For the question of individualism had a double aspect in the post-Renaissance period. If it signified the rise of the Machiavellian man, and the release of dark and demonic energies as in the Marlovian 'overreacher', it affirmed,

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at the same time, the humanist dream of the self in its widest spiritual sense. Shakespeare, in fact, fully realised the complexity of the situation, and understood that the business of a writer was not to resolve contradictions, but to dramatise them. The larger question of Shakespearean ambivalence—a term A. P. Rossiter uses in preference to ambiguity in his authoritative *Angel with Horns*—has wide-ranging philosophical import, and Shakespeare's 'double vision' in this regard as, indeed, in other areas of life such as war, politics, freedom, justice etc. needs to be taken into account.

If in Shakespeare the nuclear family still retains its force and its blessedness, in the Restoration comedy, it's reduced to a mechanism for all manner of adjustments and accommodations, both social and as sexual. The temper of this comedy, Sarup Singh, observes pertinently owes not a little to the "aggressive individualism and nationalism of Hobbes"

The remaining chapters, "Parents, and Children", "Crabbed Age and Youth", "Husbands and Wives", then, take up the matrix and mesh of familial relationships as they surface in Shakespeare, and later in the Restoration comedy. It's to the credit of Sarup Singh that he is able to show convincingly both continuities and departures, stabilities and dislocations. It there are some losses *en route*, there are also distinct gains. The Restoration playwrights did not, of course, have the visionary reach and ambience of Shakespeare, but it'll be a mistake to regard their plays as mere exercises of a disengaged imagination on a spree.

## ADVANCE IN SOCIAL TERMS

Shakespeare's position regarding our filial duties finds its most spiritual and awesome expression in *King Lear*, though the question figures in varying degrees in several other plays including his comedies, histories, tragedies and romances. Sarup Singh opines that the poet, on the whole, is sympathetic to the

children's point of view, though situated as he is, he cannot disregard "the compulsions" and constraints of a patriarchal society." It's not a classic case of divided loyalties, but of levels of understanding. The Shakespearean ideal, in the end, stipulates a spiritual compact between father and child and that explains the mystical appeal of the final romances. The nubile daughter assumes, then, a numinous aspect, leading her aged parents into new perception and epiphanies. In the Restoration drama, the position is radically changed. It's the hour of the youth all the way, and age is treated with conspicuous contempt. At the sociological level, we find the feudal values of loyalty and duty, raised to the level of fetish, challenged in a noisy and bolsterous manner, and we see the new bourgeois ethic of advancement and convenience in action. The atmosphere of these comedies is undoubtedly wanton and facetious, but as Sarup Singh puts it, there is "a clear advance in social terms over Shakespeare"

Again, in Shakespeare, old age is treated with reverence, and except for *King Lear* which for this very reason produces a surpassingly beautiful poetry of pathos—and the poetry is in the pity, to recall Wilfred Owen's memorable line—, there is hardly a play in which Adam's fear of "unregarded age in corners thrown" comes true. And the tearful farewell to old Falstaff by Doll Tearsheet is rightly seen as Shakespeare's concern for the cares and sentiment of age. Though, here and there, some of the eccentricities and absurdities of old age as in a Polonius, are laughed at, there's an underlying vein of tenderness in general. In contrast, the Restoration comedy makes its senior citizens stock figures of fun, thereby revealing a peculiar void in human relationships under the new social order.

## IDEAL OF MARRIED LOVE

As for the institution of marriage in Shakespeare, Sarup Singh is of the view that it's regarded as something of a sacred ground for the exertions and realisation of the self,

and that its dignity is always upheld. He is, of course, careful enough to imply that such an ideal involves faith, understanding, sacrifice and resilience. He questions Laurence Lerner's view that in Shakespeare love and marriage exist in a state of continual conflict, and that love ceases where the ceremony begins. The imagery of marital war in *The Taming of the Shrew* and the theme of the rivalry of the sexes in *Much Ado About Nothing*, to cite two obvious examples, have only a surface quality in keeping with the light atmosphere of these comedies. Otherwise, it's ideal—the subsuming of the romance of marriage in the business and culture of housekeeping—which seems to meet the requirements of Shakespeare's imagination. It appears to me, Sarup Singh has not taken fully into account some of the Freudian depths and distempers that erupt with such force in certain sonnets and plays. The dark pleasures of illicit sexual love and its misery undoubtedly draw their power from the poet's own private life, and the ideal of married love, like most ideals, begins to filter in the face of brutal reality.

In the Restoration comedy, on the other hand, one notices the invidious incursion of the money-motive in marriage, and its consequent desecralisation. The cash nexus, now a dominant feature of bourgeois *welanschauung*, reduces the institution to a contract, and at once makes it more vulnerable than ever. However, even then, the idea of companionate marriage is not really forsaken. It's now realised that marriage is at once a trap and a way of life, if not a mode of redemption. The chief concern of the Restoration heroine is to tame the rake into a loving husband, and make the marriage a going concern. If some of the heavenly joys of matrimony are gone, there are, at least, forceful exertions to salvage some thing of that beauty from the societal squalor of the day. That's how Sarup Singh seems to see and value such plays as *The Man of Mode* and *The Way of World*. The dream of Shakespeare isn't wholly spent.

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*Darshan Singh Maini was Professor of English at Punjabi University, Patiala and now lives in retirement at Chandigarh.*

## A View of Religion

F.E. Peters

Children of Abraham Judaism Christianity Islam

pp. 225, Princeton University Press, 1983, Price not stated.

George Nordgulen

Perspectives in World Religions (Vol. one)

pp. 263 Writers Workshop, Rs. 100.00 (Hardbound)

Rs. 80.00 (Flexible)

Reviewed by Samuel Mathai

We live in a world of conflict and violence. Often the real cause in violence within and between the nations of the world is difficult to identify, but many of the conflicts now going on have an apparent religious or ideological provocation behind them. In the Middle East, Jew and Christian and Muslim are caught in fratricidal struggles, in other parts of the world it is communist aggression or fear of communism that leads men to acts of violence. Although communism or Marxism is not a religion in the usually understood sense of the world, it has many of the characteristics of organised religion—with its creed, its fear of 'heresy' (or 'deviationism') and its 'missionary' zeal.

### ROOTS OF VIOLENCE

Real or fancied racial or ethnological factors also are causes of violence and oppression, as in South Africa, or Sri Lanka, or Cyprus, or Northern Ireland. But in most of these situations some 'religious' or cultural elements are also involved. Even within the circles of the same 'religion' conflict may arise and when political considerations are added to it the conflict becomes greatly intensified. We have within the borders of India at the present time conflict between Sikh and Hindu, and we have suffered greatly from conflict between Hindu and Muslim. Activities of groups like the Rashtriya Svayamsevak Sangh (RSS) are pro-

ductive of violence and hatred between different religious communities.

In Europe (which was known as Christendom) in the past Catholic and Orthodox and Protestant (though they were all Christians) have fought one another; and where one group was in power the other were oppressed and sometimes massacred. Even today the problem of Northern Ireland is complicated by the inability of Catholic and Protestant Christians to live together in harmony. In the Islamic world there have been fratricidal struggles between 'Sunnis' and 'Shi'ites'; and today in Iran the dominant Muslim group will not let anyone who pursues any other way of life (like the Bahais) survive.

In such a world it would seem almost impossible and futile to take a scholarly, academic view of the history, theological and cosmological ideas, and organisation and structure of the various religions of the world. Vested interests, irrational bigotry, fear of loss of identity, and other passions and phobias are involved in people's religious behaviour and attitudes. But if there is any possibility of people developing a sane and objective attitude to religion it requires a dispassionate, open-minded approach both to one's own religion and to other religions.

### ULTIMATE REALITY

Religion involves some notion of 'ultimate reality' and a belief in a "Supreme Being" or God, and a sense

of the 'numinous'—notions of 'holiness', sacredness, and mystery. Put in simple language most people who have any kind of religion would say, "I believe in God" (though they may insist on giving different names to God). In all historical religions this fundamental belief is thought to have been specially revealed or mediated through a person who is looked upon as the 'prophet'—one who spoke in the name of God, and with whom the distinct history of their 'religion' begins. Revelations of God's truth are believed to be set down in certain 'scriptures' which are treated as sacred or holy. When religions are 'compared' or when followers of different religions enter into a dialogue, one of the main things that are discussed is, "What is the view of God or Ultimate Reality in a particular religion?"

A religion, properly so called, usually has a system of "laws" and sacred tradition of observances and rituals and forms of worship. With the development of such laws and ritual practices the sense of a "community of believers" comes into being. The community is held together not so much by "belief" as by certain practices and forms of social behaviour and by the observance of some taboos, and perhaps by a sense of shared history. The community of believers or "the faithful" tends to become a mystical concept as with the Bene Yisrael of Judaism, the Sangha of Buddhism, the Ekklesia (Church) of Christianity and the Ummah of Islam. But the identification of the "faithful", in some religions and among some sects, is almost entirely through external marks like particular (types of head-dress, or taboos about certain kinds of food drink.

When a community or tribe becomes conscious of itself as having its own distinctive religion and of being a "nation"—that is, a group of people who look upon some ancestor as the 'founder' of the family—there arises the idea of a tribal religion'. This idea was first strongly manifested by the Israelites. They looked upon 'Abraham as the founder of their race, and his grandson Jacob—Israel—as the person with whom their special history as a "chosen people" began. Some



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people in India now a days tend to think of "Hinduism" in this way, though Hinduism is not, strictly speaking, one religion, and there is no historical founder or prophet of Hinduism, nor a "race" or "nation" in India analogous to the Jewish "nation".

## OFFSHOOT

Christianity was at first an offshoot of Judaism, but quite from the beginning it moved away from the Jewish ideas of "nation", and after a brief period of hesitation abandoned the ritual formalities of Judaism. But it has not completely abandoned its relationship with Judaism, and looks upon the Jewish Bible as relevant and valuable to its own understanding of God's call to man and His relationship to "His people". Christians however believe that with Jesus (whom they accept as the "Messiah" or "Christ"—"the anointed one"—and who, they believe, is the "Son of God" in a unique way) a totally new relationship between man and God has begun, and the accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus (the four 'Gospels') and the letters of instruction and exhortation written by St. Paul and others to various early groups of believers are collectively called the New Testament and added to the Jewish scriptures to make the Christian Bible. Christianity is not the religion of any one race or nation but all Christians are "children of Abraham" in a spiritual sense.

Islam has its origin clearly and unambiguously in the "revelation" of God that came to Mohammed. Islam inherits the Israelite sense of the holiness of God and the emphatic assertion of monotheism. The Muslim people—who at first were all Arabs—look upon Abraham as their ancestor even as the Israelites do. (The Israelites claim descent through Abraham's wife Sarah and her son Isaac; and the Muslims hold that they are descended through Hagar—a second wife of Abraham—and her son Ishmal). Moses who gave Israelites their Law is accepted by the Muslims also as a 'prophet'. Like Christianity, Islam spread beyond the original homeland of the first followers of Mohammed, and

people of non-Arabic lineage—Turks, Persians, Mongols, Indians, Indonesian, Malaysians, and others—were added to the "community of the faithful". Members of this large multiracial Islamic 'family', like the world-wide body of Christians "of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues", are Children of Abraham in a spiritual sense.

## PARALLELS &amp; DIFFERENCES

"Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all children born of the same Father and reared in the bosom of Abraham. They grew to adulthood in the rich spiritual climate of the Near East, and though they have lived together all their lives, now in their maturity they stand apart and regard their family resemblances and conditioned differences with astonishment, disbelief, or disdain." This is the opening sentence in F. E. Peter's book *Children of Abraham*. This is a scholarly work, the purpose of which is "to underline both the parallels and the differences" among these three religions. F. E. Peter is Professor of History and Near Eastern Languages and Literatures at New York University and is the author of several books dealing with the relationship and encounter between Greek philosophy and Judaeo-Christian and Islamic theology. In *Children of Abraham* we have a critical study of the growth of systems of thought and institutions in these three related religions. We get a clear idea of the development of sects and factions and the growth of different traditions of 'faith and order.'

Conflict between followers of different religions usually has strong ethnological, political and economic factors in it; and religious fanaticism is often stirred up by persons who seek to gain power by playing upon the fears and superstitions of ignorant people. We have many instances in history to show that religion does not always unite, but in the name of "holywar" temporary 'unity' can be achieved by followers of any one religion in spite of their internal differences and disagreements. But though there has been a recrudescence of violence associ-

ated with religion in recent years there has also been a growing effort to study religions critically, to compare religions to discover common characteristics among them, and to promote discussion between followers of various religions or sects. This is something new in the history of religions, and is an aspect of the spirit of scientific enquiry that has grown since the 19th century. Anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers and theologians have contributed to the comparative study of religion, and some thinkers have attempted, not only to compare, but also to synthesise fundamental beliefs in the major religions of the world.

## ATTEMPT AT SYNTHESIS

*Perspectives in World Religions*, as its author George Nordgulen says in the Introduction to the book, is an attempt "to show the real possibility and worthwhileness of analysing, integrating and creatively synthesizing diverse ideas and values in world religions". The author's motivation and hope in attempting such a synthesis are indicated by him in the following words: "In a day and time when political differences are seeking solutions to international relations in terms of wars and cold wars, threats and counter-threats which threaten the existence of humanity on earth; when social problems such as overpopulation, inflation and ecology... pose great threats to humanity's well-being on earth; when the human family is still divided by racism and nationalism;—surely, in the light of these, there must be a renewed effort to find and build bridges that will unite the universal human family. I believe that the religious voice of the various world religions need to be heard on these points and they need to recognize that they are fellow-workers in the great task of humanization".

The author's own position is that of a Christian whose outlook "has been heavily influenced by the contemporary philosophical tradition often referred to as process philosophy, particularly as articulated by Charles Hartshorne and A.N. Whitehead." For the purposes of this book he has selected, besides



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Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam as the major world religions, although he glances at some other religions in the course of discussion. As exponents of each of these religions he has selected a number of wellknown spokesmen or writers "who have shown an interest in creative dialogue with other religions and, in return, have attempted a renewed interpretation and transformation of their own religion."

Nordgulen's thesis is that "God or the Supreme is an essential aspect of an integrated, adequately synthesized perspective of the cosmos, man and society. If God is that which none greater can be conceived, the unsurpassable greatest, then he is the key to an inclusive, integrated, comprehensive philosophy of life." After presenting the idea of God or ultimate reality in the different religions as understood by the selected exponents the author provides a Dialogue on Ultimate Reality in the last section of this volume. At the end of this dialogue the imaginary speakers agree to go on to a discussion

on of "the cosmological question." This discussion will be presented in a second volume which is to follow.

*Perspectives in World Religions* (Vol. I) is a fascinating presentation of a subject of profound interest, although it is not easy for a lay reader to follow some of the debate. The book is unfortunately marred by a great many printing errors only some of which have been noticed in the list of "Corrections" appended to the volume). But the earnest reader of this first volume will await the publication of the second volume which is to follow.

Although academic study of the ideas and beliefs of different religions will not directly help to bring about harmony and peace in a contentious world, it is certainly a good thing that thoughtful persons should come together and talk about their beliefs and insights.

*Samuel Mathai is an ex-Vice-Chancellor of Kerala University and now lives in retirement at Trivandrum.*

entire purpose of his exercise in the book is to justify Sikkim's "take over", a phrase which he does not approve. To prove his point that the "takeover" was necessitated by real politik Das raises hypothetical questions and, these in rhetorical and populist phrases, and comes to conveniently affirmative answers.

Having been a bureaucrat and a civil servant all his life, it is but natural that moral-ethical issues involved in engineering a situation to undo a treaty which bound the Chogyal and New Delhi since the beginning of Independence, do not torment the conscience of Das as it did Morarji Desai when he said he did not approve of the manner in which the integration had been wrought. Das apparently believed that to show a mailed fist and to use it after creating the necessary conditions for it is the best and only way of serving what he perceives as national interests.

It is this aspect of the book, which has been put in a crass and crude fashion, that will cause a revulsion in public mind among India's neighbours about the perception of its role in a geopolitical configuration of geographical, ethnic and cultural contiguities in the sub-continent. The key thought in the mind of Das appears to be that it had been New Delhi's weakness that had caused it to accept merely the "protectorate concept" for Sikkim and he believes that Nehru's idealism had been a misplaced one. "After all", Das says, "never had India such a determined and strong head of government as Mrs Gandhi" and she had the services of Kewal Singh then Foreign Secretary who was a "hard headed bureaucrat who reacted to situations without attachments" of the kind T. N. Kaul had of being "brought up during the Nehru era with a belief in India's intrinsic values which could not be compromised."

Das's interpretation of Kewal Singh's approach makes strange reading. Das believes that initially "merger" had been a "dirty word" for Kewal Singh but suddenly, we find Das saying that Kewal Singh considered "Nepal to be an example of erosion of Indian interests. Bhutan's entry into the UN was a

## A Study in Contrast

B.S. Das

*The Sikkim Saga*

pp. vii+166, Vikas, 1983, Rs. 75.00 in India only

Nari Rustamji

*Imperilled Frontiers : India's North-Eastern Borderlands*

pp. 160, Oxford University Press, 1983, Rs. 80.00

Reviewed by U.S. Phadnis

India's presence in South Asia has been, both contemporaneously and historically, a source of inspiration as well as an embarrassment or worse to its neighbours. Naturally, therefore, there is a love-hate relationship between them and India their perception of its role conditioned by the good it can do and the evil that it is capable of doing to their specific identities.

### SOMEWHAT CRUDE

*The Sikkim Saga* has to be seen in this context, for it is known that the manner of Sikkim's integration with India, whatever its rationale,

produced shock waves among the South Asian countries and continues to rankle in public memory. In fact it is difficult to understand why B.S. Das chose to write it in a manner which can only stoke the embers of an unpleasant controversy which might have died down in the course of time. This, more particularly so, when he was no longer Chief Executive of Sikkim when events leading to the overthrow of the Chogyal unfolded themselves.

In his preface, Das looks back at the days when he was the Chief Executive and recalls how he had "cautioned against too rapid a process of Indianisation" but the



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blunder. Sikkim having been a part of India prior to India's independence could not be permitted any liberties".

#### MORAL ASPECT

It will be for Kewal Singh to comment on Das's interpretation of his views but it is possible that Kewal Singh was adjusting himself to Mrs Gandhi's perception of Indian power in the region and her own approach to the exercise of power within the country. After all the merger was just a few months away from the imposition of Emergency and in retrospect may well be seen as a shadow of coming events.

Although Das disdainfully dismisses the moral aspect of the question raised by Morarji Desai he does not hesitate to pontificate on corruption in the feudal set up of the Chogyal and the responsibility of India as the custodian of democracy to help the democratic forces in Sikkim do away with Chogyal's rule. The book seeks, in fact, with the author's own self righteous standards, besides his ability to outwit and outsmart not only the Chogyal but also his advisors.

However that be, coming as it does from a responsible and senior civil servant, the book is a sordid chronicle setting virtually a blow by blow account of how the Foreign Office manipulated the anti-Chogyal movement with the eventual purpose of securing Sikkim's merger, fully justifying the objections entered for it by Morarji Desai.

In sharp contrast is Nari Rustamji's portrayal of the problems of the North Eastern states of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh and of the efforts to find political solutions to situations, which in etiology, were the same as those that afflicted Sikkim, namely, the bewilderment of a people with a long tradition of isolation when brought face to face with a new reality.

#### SYMPATHETIC

*Imperilled Frontiers* is, in a manner of speaking, a sequel to Rustamji's enchanting *Enchanted*

*Frontiers* although it is not quite as graphic as the earlier book. Having spent his entire lifetime there beginning first as a probationer in the ICS ending up as the Governor's Advisor to Assam, Rustamji has a sympathetic understanding of the psyche of the people in the region and the policy postulates emerging from the book are quite different from those implicit in Das's book.

Historically, as Assam was the only area fully integrated with the rest of India, how the Assamese dealt with the tribals there had causal effect either in the stability or instability of the region and Rustomji considers Assamese "irredentism" was largely responsible for the disturbed state of affairs beginning with the the Naga problem in the early fifties to the present unsettled conditions in Mizoram. This may be an oversimplification of the rather complex issues involved

of which Rustamji has shown ample awareness.

Analysing the problems of the region, Rustamji rightly believes that there is no uniform solution that could be applied arbitrarily in the case of all peoples and all areas. He decries the official and public reaction to any incidence of tribal insurgency that the tribals were at fault and had to be summarily brought to book. And, as has been proven time and again, as Rustomji says, "the methods to restore stability have generally had in fact the effect of aggravating the instability."

It is to be hoped that Rustamji's policy prescriptions of an approach to the problems of the region, which bear repetition will inform political leaders and administrators alike.

*U.S. Phadnis works for the Hindustan Times, New Delhi.*

## Important Contribution

R. Ramakrishna

*Social Reform in Andhra 1848-1919*

pp. ix+241, Vikas, 1983, Rs. 95.00 in India only

Reviewed by Rama S. Metkote

There has been, of late, a revival of interest among social scientists and activists in the 19th century social reform movement. The latter pose questions such as, to what extent and in what direction has social reform contributed to women's emancipation in India? More generally, social scientists look into the nature of social and religious reforms movement and its impact on society, whether with regard to caste or religion. Many works have appeared on the social reform movement and on the lives of individual reformers. However, considering the regional diversities in a region-wise study of the movement and its impact on different regions seems important. R. Ramakrishna's book on, *Social Reform in Andhra 1848-1919* answers this need.

Social reform in Andhra was a part of the all-India movement, and

was largely influenced in its origin and growth by reforms movements earlier witnessed in Bengal and Maharashtra. The book covers the Andhra region of the present day Andhra Pradesh which was a part of the erstwhile composite Madras Presidency and the area which was governed directly by the British. The work covers the period 1848-1919 which corresponds to the life span of Kandukuri Veeresalingam who, more than any one else, consolidated the stray reforms trends before him and made it into a movement.

#### DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

The author begins with a descriptive study of the Andhra society in the 19th century. When the Andhra region was brought under British control by the beginning of the 19th century, Andhra society was chara-



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cterised by heirarchical caste system with Brahmins at the apex by "virtue of their high position in ritualistic heirarchy and monopoly of learning." They also constituted an important segment of the landed gentry of the countryside. As such, they were the arbiters of morals in society. Below the Vaisyas (Komatis-traders and money lenders) and the Sudras (Reddis, Kammass, Kapus, Telagas etc.) were the untouchables—segregated and treated slaves with no social status nor rights.

Social behaviour and etiquette depended on one's caste status in the society. The eventual improved material status followed by a process of 'Sanskritisation' expressed itself in the imitation by the 'lower castes' of the 'higher castes in adopting vedic ritual, vegetarianism, child marriage, discontinuing the practice of widow re-marriage etc. Caste distinctions persisted after increased mobility brought by the introduction of railways and other communications. Among the socio-religious evils that plagued the society, 'Sati' was the cruellest. Domestic bonded labour was also prevalent. Kanyasulkam (Brideprice) the practice of selling brides and the 'nautch' (dancing girls) resulted in child marriages, infanticide, premature widowhood etc. Innumerable superstitions with regard to women were prevalent.

Religious life in society was greatly affected by the supreme position held by the Brahmins. Education was limited to a privileged few. By the second half of the 19th century Anglo-vernacular schools were opened in many parts of Andhra. An educational atmosphere was created and 'people began to clamour for English and better teachers' One could see the beginnings of enlightenment in the Godavari district which was to become later the centre of reform activity in Andhra (p. 18). The rich and hence more urbanised delta regions of Kirshna and Godavari districts topped in the number of schools and scholars. Between 1854-1882 four colleges were established in Rajahmundry, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam and Machilipatnam. Education was urban-based and confined to the upper and middle

classes. The lowest classes which were poverty stricken did not send their children to schools as they were forced to employ them as labourers from a very early age.

#### ECONOMIC LIFE

As for economic life in Andhra the typical features were the concentration of economic power in the zamindars and *poligars* who came mostly from Kahatriyas, Velamas and Kammass, the miserable conditions of peasants, oppressive system of land revenue and heavy rural indebtedness. Mid 19th century saw the growth of towns and the emergence of a professional educated middle classes who fought for liberal and democratic values and respected the individual but not religious authority. They stood for "intellectual freedom and social mobility, became the carriers of new ideas and provided social base for and orientation to social reform movements." (p. 35)

A historical survey of reform trends in Andhra (ch. 2) takes us back to the middle ages i.e. much before the 13th century A.D. when the Bhakti cult was predominant and assumed the militant forms of Veerashaivism and Sri Vaishnavism. The reformers denounced caste, vedic rites, inferior status of woman, opposed child marriages and allowed widow-re-marriages. Later in the 17th Century Vemana, the poet philosopher preached his ideas, attacked social inequalities, every external aspect of Hindu religiosity and Brahmin rituals.

But Vemana did not extend his progressive ideas to women whom he considered "as a source of evil and undependable." Other reformers Veerabraham, Narsaiah (a Muslim of the Syed lineage) also condemned the heirarchical system of caste. Most of these movements were independent by nature, came from the lower castes and were in no way influenced by western ideas. However eventually they got absorbed into the established Brahminical order. By the end of the first half of 19th century Andhra experienced the first stirrings of reform and by

1870s there developed a movement under the leadership of K. Veeresalingam.

#### FORCE OF A MOVEMENT

It was Veeresalingam (Ch. 3) who gave social reform the force of a movement and inaugurated a new era in Telugu literature. He used his journal *Vivekavardhini* as "an effective media of disseminating the ideas of reform and modernism." Veeresalingam earned the title of 'Gadya Tikkana'. More than anyone else it was he who contributed to the education of women. Knowledge as a weapon of liberation, rationalist outlook or scientific education were the ingredients of his social outlook. He held sastras and vedas as irrelevant in bringing about social reform. Some critics have held Veeresalingam to be a political reactionary. The author holds that Veeresalingam was really a social reformer of early 19th century and had no proper grasp of British colonial rule nor a political perspective. This does not make him a political reactionary, as his major concern and efforts were in the improvement of society around him and not with the immediate withdrawal of British rule.

Veeresalingam's major contribution was to the uplift of women (Ch. 4). Backwardness of women was attributed to lack of education. Only devadasi women were entitled to some education. Some schools for Hindu women were opened in circars, Vizianagaram and Pithapuram, in 1867 and 1868. Veeresalingam's journal *Vivekavardhini* propagated female education through English language and western knowledge. Women's association also came into being as a result of his efforts.

The first all-Andhra Women's Conference was organised in Guntur in 1910 and was presided over by P. Laxminarasamamba. Increased education and cultural activities led women to associate themselves with public service activities.

Another major activity of the reformers was in the field of marriage reform. Infant marriages,



particularly in the Circar areas, was common among the Brahmins. Voices of protest and public debate were heard before 1850. Another evil Kanyasulkam (Bride price and selling of brides) was also common among Brahmins and to a lesser extent among Vaisyas. Gujarajada Appa Rao's immortal satirical play Kanyasulkam (1897) is a mirror of the then social set-up of Andhra. Quoting sastras, Veeresalingam deplored child marriage and Kanyasulkam. His *Rajasekhara Charitramu* depicting the conditions of widow is a turning point in Telugu literature. The movement for widow remarriage culminated in the formation of Widow Re-marriage Association in 1879 at Rajahmundry with Veeresalingam as Secretary. Widow marriages were performed against all odds. Homes for widows were started in Rajahmundry, Madras, Guntur etc. The one at Guntur started by Unnava Lakshmi Naryana developed into a reputed girls high school called 'Sarada Niketan'.

As the author notes, the taboo against widow re-marriage never really assumed serious proportions in the 'lower' castes as the practice of 'Maru Manuvu' (re-marriage) was prevalent among them at least until they began to 'Sanskritise' themselves. Hence the movement which was widespread in towns hardly reached the countryside. Nevertheless its importance as a campaign against orthodoxy cannot be belittled.

#### SOCIAL PURITY

Another movement for reform was the social Purity movement (Ch. 5). The major problem confronting the reformers was the problem of nautch (dancing) girls. The anti-nautch agitation was a part of the uplift of women and removal of stigma attached to music and dance. The devadasis, originally dedicated to gods and temples gradually became, with deteriorating economic conditions, objects of public enjoyment. It became a status symbol to have them perform at marriages and other public functions.

Veeresalingam's movement against nautch parties was carried on through his journal Vivekavardhini.

Some of the nautch girls themselves came forward and participated. Efforts by caste Association—ex-Arya-Vysya Association also helped to eradicate the evil. Although no spectacular results were achieved by the movement, the practice of holding nautch performances was given up by many. Certain castes, Jakkula caste for instance, gave up the practice of setting apart one girl for prostitution. As no effective alternatives and employment opportunities could be provided, the problem continued. The temperance movement against the evil of drinking did not meet with much success either, as the sale of liquor brought increasing revenues to the exchequer.

The social purity and temperance movements were essentially puritanical and were confined mostly to urban areas and the reforms did not take the message to the masses. The Brahma Samaj and Prarthana movement in Andhra as part of religious reform went beyond the strict scope of religious reform and strove for recording of social institution and relations. The primacy of private conscience in religion and restoration of Hinduism to its original purity based on the upanishands and Brahma sutras was the thrust of the movement. The first prarthana Samaj was established by Veeresalingam in Rajahmundry in 1878.

#### INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT

Unlike in Maharashtra where both social and religious reforms were undertaken by the same Association, in Andhra separate associations were established, although members were the same in both the Associations. Veeresalingam in his articles held social evils as obstacles to social progress. He condemned polytheism and varnashrama dharma and declared that "Vedas, Bible and Koran are not true. The miracles therein are unbelievable" (p. 161). In 1906, Veeresalingam gave up the sacred thread and became, a militant Anustanic Brahma. The Raja of Pithapuram contributed to the establishment of a theistic high school in Rajahmundry which was called K. Veeresalingam Theistic high school, which was co-educational. The

nationalist movement which became vigorous after 1920, and the non-Brahmin movement, cut at the roots of the Brahma movement and soon all other movements were submerged and their issues and problems got absorbed into its programme of action.

The author notes (Ch. 7) that while the mission for social reform was not completely realised, the philosophy and the need for social reform at least at the theoretical level was accepted thanks to the persistent efforts of the reformers. The participation of Telugus in the Indian National Congress and Indian National Social Conference, holding of similar conferences at the district level in the Andhra area helped the spread of the movement. Discussions in these conferences covered the whole gamut of social reform. Women and their problems occupied the first place. Major participation in these conferences came from the enlightened sections of the public such as students, teachers, lawyers and government officials at the taluk and district level. A small number of traders, and middle peasants, with some education also participated, as occasionally a rich land-lord or a zamindar. By the turn of the century, social reform movement in India, in general, had lost much of its initial vigour. In Andhra too, the movement due to heterogeneous membership, lack of organisation, lack of resources and above all, due to the rise of the nationalist movement weakened and got absorbed in to the nationalist movement. Veeresalingam and other reformers who held that social reforms must precede political reform were overtaken and overridden by facts and events. The movement in its later stages began to take up issues such as the lot of the depressed classes, national education etc. which were a part of the programme of the Indian National Congress.

#### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Other reasons for the decline of the social reforms movement were the rise of the Theosophical Society glorifying Hinduism and the scriptures, Swami Vivekananda's criticism of social reformers, forma-



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# NEW QUEST

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tion of caste associations and the movement for a separate Andhra Province which became organised in 1913. As the movements itself never went beyond the reach of the middle classes, the masses were left with their problems of poverty, ignorance and illiteracy untouched. The feudal set-up itself could not be shaken by social reforms limited to the middle classes.

In the concluding chapters the author views the Social Reforms movements in its historical perspective. The movement was not simply a "result" of the cultural, ideological and institutional changes introduced by the British nor was it an immediate consequence of the enlightenment of an educated stratum through the agency of western ideas with their rationalism and scientism. There existed a tradition of protest and dissent even before the establishment of the British rule and the nineteenth

century reform movements drew upon them.

In Andhra these reform efforts were best represented by Veeresalingam. The contribution of the reformers was not so much in terms of actual achievement as in creating a social climate which recognized the harmful effects of social evils as child marriage etc. The religious dimension of these social evils was realised and fully understood and hence religious reform went hand in hand with social reforms. However the ideas of reform never percolated to the masses as the movement remained essentially middle class in character. The impact of the movement was confined to the educated, residing in towns and a few villages around. The old feudal relations continued and social mobility was limited, although the new revenue settlements created private property in land and introduced individual ownership of land and thereby changing the basis of

society from one of status to one of contract. As the new order of capitalist economy and new social layers associated with it had not fully developed the reform movements could not draw continuous sustenance for their growth and success and stopped half way. The another intricate problem, that of caste, could not be solved by reformers although caste restrictions were loosened to a limited extent.

The movement created the backdrop to nationalist movement in Andhra and contributed the first generation of national leader--- Tanguturi Prakasham, Bhogaraju, Pattabhi Seetharamaiah, Ayyadevara Kaleshwara Rao, Unnava Laxmi Narayana etc.

#### AHEAD OF TIMES

It must be added, that social movements which are ahead of their time cannot be judged by their influence, success or failure. It would

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be more useful to probe into their sources of strength and weakness for a better understanding and draw lessons for the future.

The 19th century Social Reform movement must be viewed in the context of or as a by product of religious reform movements such as Brahma Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, and Arya Samaj etc. Their endeavour was to recast the old religions into a new mould to meet the needs of a new society heralded by British imperialism. The needs of capitalism and British individualism were extended to religion. These reforms in religion were extended to reconstruction of social institutions and social relations because of sanction of religion to social structure. However their approach was essentially idealistic and religio-spiritual. Politics tainted with religion became mystified and retarded the extension of the social base of the movement.

The book is very well researched with extensive footnotes. Some of the footnotes could have easily gone into the main text. Certain

details of the participation of women in some of the reform movements have been pushed down to the footnotes. For example in the footnotes on page 122, we find an account of the services rendered by Rajyalakshamma, the wife of Neeresalingam to the cause of widow remarriage. On page 141, we find in the footnotes that Bangalore Nagaratnamma and her daughter Yaminipurna, Tilakam, both nautch girls started a journal and conducted several meetings throughout Andhra and influenced several members of the community to give up their profession. These women were not leaders, but what they as women did in order to liberate themselves and others is of greater importance than what the leaders exhorted them to do.

The book is an important contribution towards a better understanding of the movement.

*Rama S. Melkote is Reader in Political Science at Osmania University, Hyderabad.*

separately at least, the present position of the various observances listed out and explained in the book. The reader would then know the changes that have occurred over a period of nearly a hundred years. The impact of the changes on the different classes within the same community could also have been given. For instance, it would be interesting to know whether the husband of a pregnant woman in Dera Ghazi Khan still avoids applying antimony to the eyelids (and whether he applies it at all even in normal times) and avoids putting on a tilak on his forehead or avoids locking or unlocking of a lock or desists from cutting wood when there is an eclipse. Similarly, whether a pregnant woman, even today, avoids looking at her brother's face. (pages 9 & 10). All these things look, to the modern Indian, mere blind superstitions.

Quite a few of the beliefs and superstitions are curious and interesting, for example one of the beliefs connected with the birth of a Hindu child is given below :

Birth in the eighth month is attributed to a cat having entered the mother's room during the former's confinement and a child born in this month is believed to die on the eighth day, in the eighth month or eighth or eighteenth year after birth. In the Deve tahsil of Kangra, a child born in the eighth month is called as "wahaa" and is regarded as unlucky to both its parents, foreboding the father's death. As a remedy, a spinning wheel is passed thrice round the mother's head, and then given to the mid-wife". There are many such beliefs narrated in the book. These are dealt with in extenso in the second chapter and are interesting to read. Similarly, connected with the birth of child among the Muhammadans are given observances in chapter 4 that are equally interesting. For instance, a child born with feet "Foremost" is called a 'pa'el' and women believe that a few gentle kicks from one so born will relieve pains in the back." (p.44)

## Interesting

H.A. Rose

*Rites and Ceremonies of Hindus and Muslims*

pp. 223, Amar Prakashan, 1983, Rs. 150.00.

Reviewed by M. Gopalakrishnan & S.Y. Govindarajan

This is the first reproduction of the book originally published in 1908. The book is based on the census report for the Punjab 1883 by the late Sir Denzil Ibbetson, K.C.S.I. and the census report for the Punjab 1892 by Sir Edward Mallagan K.C.I.E., C.S.I., The author added his own observations based upon his first hand knowledge of social customs of the undivided Punjab.

The book enumerates the pregnancy-observances, birth-observances, betrothal-observances and death-observances among the Hindus and the Muslims. These are dealt with in ten chapters, one each devoted to a class of observances for each of the two communities. In addition there is a chapter devoted exclusively to domestic observances in South-

East Punjab. This is because the rites and ceremonies in that area are distinct and observed only there. In addition there is a chapter on "Fictitious kinship in the Punjab". In all there are thus twelve chapters.

### EXTINCT

Some of these observances were nearly extinct even at the time when the book was published (1908). The author says, for example, in the first page itself "In Fazilka an observance, now nearly extinct, is observed by Hindu Aroras in the third month of a first pregnancy. It is called the 'ankh salai' because after it the wife ceases to apply antimony to her eyes". It would be really useful if the reproduction of the book now brought out had contained



## COMMON BELIEFS

Some of these beliefs are common among the Hindus and Mohammadans. For example, on p 51 it is stated "Like the Hindus, the Muhammadans imagine that the sixth night after the birth the child is peculiarly subject to demoniacal influences". One peculiar custom in Gujarat is also cited. (p. 57) "In the villages of Gujarat the family Brahman of a Muhammadan family makes an imitation *pipal* tree, before the fourth day, and receives from rupee one to five, according to the family's position". The various observances connected with different important events in a person's life right from inception till death and after, are described in detail. Within the same religion they vary from region to region and group to group or tribe to tribe. These are brought out fairly elaborately.

The 12th Chapter deals with "Fictitious kinship in the Punjab". As the author puts it in the beginning of the chapter "The ideas underlying the formation of the effects of those ties, when formed are not only of importance from a practical point of view as illustrating such practices as adoption, rules of succession, and the like, but they are also of considerable interest as illustrating the possibilities of castes or even tribes, having been formed by accretion. Among the most primitive races of the North-West Frontier of India the ties of fosterage are very strong, more stringent even than those of blood-kinship; and throughout India, at least among the non-Muhammadans, adoptions play a very important role, in the laws of inheritance".

## GANGA BROTHERS

There is a relationship where two persons became Ganga-bhais or Ganga brothers, which entails the consequences of natural kinship which operates as a bar to marriage between the parties. This relationship is established by making a pilgrimage to the Ganges together and there drinking the waters

of the sacred river from each other's hands. Such relationship can be there between two women. Sometimes women exchange children and become sisters irrespective of their castes. Some of the fictitious relationships can act as bars to marriage between the relatives but not all such relationship. All this makes absorbing reading.

## Books Received

(A brief notice here does not preclude a detailed review later on)

Indian Association for Educational Planning and Administration. Towards Improved Educational Planning and Administration: Proceedings of the First National Conference of Indian Association of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, 1982. Delhi, Dialogue, 1983. XXX, 79 p. Rs. 60.00.

The papers focus upon 'Administrative leadership in schools, Management of higher education, and Towards improved educational planning.

Kakrambe, S.A. Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil and Mass Education Movement: Its Political Impact on Maharashtra. Bombay. Somaiya, 1983. xvi, 186 p. Rs. 90.00

Through behavioural and political developmental approach, the author attempts to assess the extent of Bhaurao's contribution.

Pia Nazarath. Education: Goals, Aims and Objectives. Vikas, 1984. viii, 128p. Rs. 75.

This book attempts to convince educators of the importance of goals and their specifications; identify the goals, which are further classified as aims and objectives; concretize the objectives describing the operational strategies for each aim; show the necessity of planning school activities as a primary, crucial step, and of evaluating the process of work, to fathom their relevance or irrelevance to the goals.

There are quite a few printing errors and omissions in the book. The binding is good but the price (at Rs. 150/-) is too high.

*M. Gopalakrishnan is Secretary for Agriculture to the Government of Andhra Pradesh and S.Y. Govindarajan is member for Finance in the Telugu Ganga Project Board, Hyderabad.*

Ramachandra R. Melville and Conrad. Vasudha Prakashana, 1983. xii, 168p. Rs. 28.

A comparative study of Melville and Conrad both as artists and visionaries.

Sahni, Sati. Centre-State Relations. Vikas, 1984. xiii, 300p. Rs. 150.

This book compiles the proceeding of the historic debate on Centre-State relations—the three-day Conclave in Srinagar, of the opposition leaders, in October 1983—which resulted in the now famous Srinagar Declaration.

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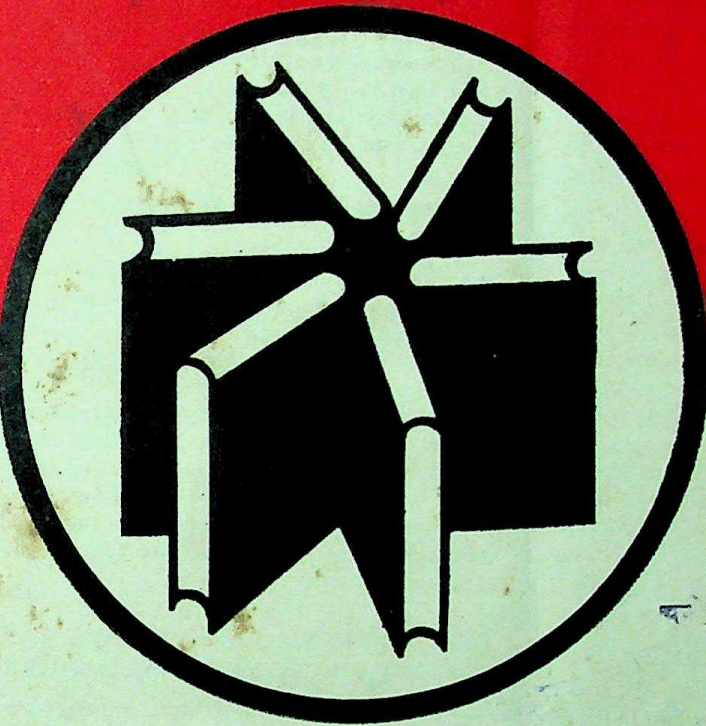
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# Indian Book Chronicle

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EDITOR : AMRIK SINGH

## Marxism & Anthropology

In this well-argued book Bloch is concerned to do three things : first, to demonstrate that Marx and Engels were guided by two contradictory concerns in their approach to primitive societies ; second, to show that their followers have failed to resolve the contradiction ; and third, to examine whether the anthropological observations of Marx and Engels are tenable in the light of subsequent researches.

Bloch argues that Marx was interested in primitive societies for two different reasons, namely the historical and the rhetorical. He developed a general theory of social change and looked for some confirmation that the general principles of history which he saw at work in the capitalist society had also been operative in all previous societies, including the most primitive.

### RHETORICAL REASONS

Second, Marx was also interested in primitive societies for rhetorical reasons. He was convinced that capitalism was a historical and not a natural social formation in the sense that it did not once exist and will one day be superseded. In order to demonstrate its historicity, Marx had to show that its distinctive institutions did not exist in precapitalist societies. He, therefore, turned to these societies to prove that they either organised the familiar capitalist institutions very differently or were wholly free of them. He assumed that the more primitive a society, the more it was bound to differ from capitalism, and that the earliest societies offered examples of institutions as different from the capitalist as possible.

Marx was particularly interested in three institutions which he regarded as central to the capitalist mode of production, namely the relations of production, property and the family. His rhetorical interest led him to anthropology for examples of societies wholly free of these institutions. He seized on Morgan's view that the primitive societies were based on personal kinship relations. In contrast to the impersonal and exploitative relations between the workers and the capitalists, the kinship relations were personal, egalitarian, non-exploitative and based on strict reciprocity. Marx similarly accepted the view that there was no private property in primitive societies and sided with Morgan in his controversy with McLennan. Marx also accepted the view that the social life in these societies was undifferentiated and was like one large family in which marriages as we know them today did not exist.

Bloch argues that the equally legitimate historical and rhetorical concerns of Marx had several unfortunate consequences. To start with, they pointed in opposite directions and created a contradiction in Marx's thought. The historical concern required Marx to stress the unity of human history, whereas the rhetorical concern required him to stress its diversity and discontinuity. If all history, is class history as maintained by Marx's theory of history, the primitive societies cannot be classes, and cannot constitute the polar opposite of

\*Maurice Bloch, *Marxism & Anthropology, The History of a Relationship*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983, Rs. 130.00.



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capitalism. Conversely, if these societies were really classless, then Marx's theory of history would turn out to be incorrect and would not be able to explain how these societies changed and were eventually superseded. In other words Marx cannot consistently maintain *both* his theory of social change and his description of primitive societies. He must jettison one or the other. Further Marx was led by his rhetorical interest to see primitive societies in highly idyllic and unrealistic terms. What is more such a view of them made it difficult for him to explain their supersession.

#### BASIC CONTRADICTION

In Bloch's view Marx's followers had to come to terms with and resolve the basic contradiction of his thought. They attempted to deal with it in one of two ways. Some of them, especially the French and the American Marxists rejected his views of primitive societies and applied to them such capitalist categories as class contradiction, ideology and articulation of mode of production. Others, such as Engels, Kautsky, Plekhanov and the Russian Marxists took the opposite view. They accepted Marx's description of primitive societies. Since his class-centred materialist theory of history could not be applied to them, they imported the theory of vulgar materialism to explain them. The theory combined technological determinism with the Darwinian theory of natural selection. According to Bloch the first group of Marxists were true to Marx's theory of social change, but untrue to historical reality, whereas the second group was guilty of the opposite mistake.

On the basis of contemporary anthropological research, Bloch argues that some of Marx's views still stand whereas others are wrong and must be rejected. He rejects Marx's views that human history passes through certain definite and well-ordered stages, that there is an unavoidable link-up between the technological, the political, the economic and kinship systems, that technology satisfactorily explains the division of labour in primitive societies, that increasing exchange is correlated with technological specialisation, and so on. He also argues that such terms as 'primitive' and 'feudal' are too abstract to capture the specificity of different systems subsumed under them. He argues further that Marx and Engels were wrong to assume that the information gained about the contemporary peoples whose life depends on a simple technology was valid for understanding the social institutions of pre-historic peoples who had relied on a similar technology.

According to Bloch some of Marx's other views are much more tenable. In his view he was right to understand the status of women in terms of the systems of labour and property. He was also right to correlate very simple agriculture and gentile constitution. Although his theory of the origin of the state was questionable, his analysis of its nature and mode of functioning was correct. He was also right to distinguish between slavery and wage labour, as well as between small scale domestic slavery and the system in which whole societies are based on slavery. Above all he was right to insist that all social institutions and concepts have a history, and are integral part of the larger social system.

#### FRAMEWORK

Bloch has written an interesting and scholarly book. He provides a framework within which the history of Marxist anthropology can be fruitfully analysed. His assessment of Marx and Engels is perceptive and highlights their strength and limitations. I do not, however, find his general thesis either clear or convincing. He notices a fundamental contradiction between Marx's historical and rhetorical

interests. It is not clear as to what he means by the historical interest. Sometimes he takes it to mean that Marx was interested in primitive societies in order to find out what they were really like and whether his general theory could be applied to them. On most occasions however, he maintains that Marx studied primitive societies in order to prove the validity of his general theory. Since according to Bloch, Marx was concerned not to ascertain the historical truth about primitive societies but only to elect convenient facts to prove a general theory whose validity he took for granted, Marx's interest can hardly be considered historical. Further it is common knowledge that Marx revised his theory of history in the light of his knowledge of Russian society, and that he explicitly disavowed any attempt to construct an abstract and universal theory of history. Without further evidence one cannot therefore accept Bloch's thesis that Marx was concerned to somehow fit the available facts about primitive societies into his independently formulated theory of history.

Although Bloch is obviously right to insist that Marx tended to see primitive societies as wholly different from capitalism, he is wrong to insist that the reason for this lay in Marx's rhetorical interest. Marx was heavily influenced by Hegel's metaphysics, an important fact which Bloch overlooks. For Hegel the conceptual and historical development of everything, including human society, follows a particular pattern. From an initial state of undifferentiated whole, it moves to differentiation and eventually to rational unity. Marx shared this view and argued that the primitive societies were wholly natural and undifferentiated in character. In other words his view of primitive societies was profoundly shaped by his Hegelian assumptions and not, at any rate not wholly or even primarily, by his rhetorical concern to demonstrate the historicity of capitalism.



Marx's rhetorical interest was realised by showing that many of the central institutions of capitalism did not obtain under feudalism and classical Athens and Rome, and did not require him to turn to primitive societies.

#### NO CONTRADICTION

Bloch's alleged contradiction in Marx's thought springs from his view that historical materialism is centered around the notion of class conflict. This is why he argues that Marx's theory of history does not apply to the classless primitive societies. Bloch is wrong to define historical materialism in terms of class conflict. Marx emphasises the centrality of the mode of material production, and aims to explain the entire social structure in terms of it. In

his view some modes of production do not permit or require social differentiation or stratification, and do not give rise to classes. Others do, and can only be articulated through the estates, the classes and so on. In other words Marx's theory of history covers both classless and class-divided societies and applies to primitive societies as well. True, it may not be able to offer an adequate explanation of the primitive or for that matter of the capitalist societies either. The point, however, is that it is *intended* to apply to *all* societies in history. There is, therefore, no contradiction or ambiguity at the heart of Marx's thought.

*Bhikhu Parekh is Vice-Chancellor of the M.S. University of Baroda.*

## Need for Jail Reforms

**Kumkum Chadha**

*The Indian Jail : A contemporary document*  
pp. 251, Vikas, Rs. 125.00

Reviewed by Amitabha Bhattacharya

Establishment flogging has become so fashionable and commonplace these days that the moment you come across a book like the one under review you think you know what its contents would be like. And what could be a better bait for an upcoming Delhi journalist than the *Indian Jail*? Yet this book, its sentimentality and apparent superficiality notwithstanding, does not belong to the genre which could be brushed aside lightly.

Kumkum Chadha is much more than a smart Delhi journalist and her attempt has been to expose the miserable conditions obtaining in most of our prisons. Even admitting that in a country where such large proportions of its population live below the poverty line and many more with hand to mouth existence, the jails cannot be places offering much creature comforts to the undertrials, pris-

oners and the condemned, there can hardly be any excuse for anybody to justify the conditions in which many of them exist. Even within the existing constraints, things could be much improved.

#### HOLDING THE BALANCE

Chadha, in her journalistic flare, tries at times to sentimentalise even cold facts, perhaps with the good intention of driving her point home. And the whole book seems to be written from the angle of the inmates. That is why the work ceases to be a balanced academic document. But perhaps that is not the intention of the author either and balanced journalism seems to be almost a contradiction in terms, at least in many cases of Indian journalism.

She discusses the corruption by the jail officials and as per her estimates, a corrupt I.G. Prison,

on an average can make one lakh rupees per month, a corrupt Superintendent around seventy to seventy five thousands, a corrupt Deputy Superintendent about fifty to sixty thousands and a corrupt Doctor about fifteen thousand rupees per month. Anti-corruption Bureau, please take note!

Excerpts from various committee reports on jail reform have been liberally quoted in support of her thesis. An overview of Indian prisons which, according to her, is typical of the appalling conditions obtaining in such place reads like this: "...insufficient accommodation, indiscriminate huddling of offenders, unhygienic conditions, sub-standard food, insufficient water supply, use of drugs and narcotics by inmates, atrocities on children and women, maltreatment of prisoners and corruption..." and "...half baked or over-burnt rotis, maggots and worms in cooked food, undertrial prisoners in loin cloth and open basket system latrines in use..."

And it is indeed sad that only in three states the recommendations of the jail reform committees have been implemented and that except in the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, "the Jail manuals have remained archival documents". Chadha deals with umpteen issues on which the Committee of Jail reforms focus their attention.

#### PATHETIC & REPRESSIVE

She holds the government and the concerned departments responsible for not implementing the various recommendations of the Committee, which have caused such pathetic and repressive conditions in our jails. She is naturally against the "monotony of prison diet" and observes that an unbearable stench, because of inadequate toilet facilities, has become an inseparable part of "prison culture".

She observes, perhaps rightly, that "The plight of women, children and young offenders in



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jails is especially a matter of great concern. At the moment there are only six institutions for women offenders with a total capacity of 975. Most states have only an annexe or a portion of the Central or District jail for confinement of women with "overall supervision by the male staff. "The fact that the women's enclosure is housed inside the prison for men, exposes them to the risk of being exploited". She also categorises the prisoners both in terms of sex and in terms of accepted classification of A, B and C types as per jail manuals and the treatment meted out to them. And she attempts to justify her contention with the help of an impressive array of statistical figures.

However, the most readable portion of this book is where she deals with the condemned prisoners. And few would disagree with her when she pleads that the least we can do to those awaiting death is to make their lives livable and ensure that they are provided with atleast basic comforts in their last days, the minimum of which include the provision of his favourite food, strengthening their channels of communication besides giving them some freedom of movement and recreational facilities. 'It is unpardonable to forget that Jails are the caretakers of his last days in this world. It is equally cruel to deny him what would be his due rights outside the Jail. In this context, the contact with his family is important. The Jail authorities should ensure that the condemned man and his family meet atleast once a month, even if it is at Government cost. With special permission, a few days before the execution, arrangements should be made for the prisoner to visit his home or village before his final walk to the gallows. It is indeed unfortunate that while drawing up recommendations, neither the Committee on Jail Reforms nor the Model Prison Manual has touched upon the humanitarian aspect of the man who has to die-and does not know when because of the procedural jungle of our legal system".

100

## INTENSELY HUMANE

Another intensely humane aspect of this book is her piercing yet compassionate interviews with the condemned prisoners. Since it can be presumed that those expecting death anytime would not normally be lying, these conversations throw a good deal of light into how a criminal is made and what the Government in particular and the society at large could do in this direction. Though her observations that a hardened criminal is not born and that it is the system which throws him outside the pale of society are simplistic and her statement "if the police and the law were guided by the dictates of justice then the term undertrial should have been obsolete" seems a bit of an overstatement, one would clearly understand how the cycle of crimi-

nal justice at times results in brutalisation of individuals. It is here that the question of humanism comes in.

The book is profuse with gory details of what she calls the "due process of law". And how they lead to degeneration of human beings and involves them in a vicious cycle from the clutches of which they could hardly escape.

Ujagar Singh, the assassin in Vidya Jain murder case, along with his brother Kartar Singh is such a case in point. During his conversation, he discloses that they had fought with Billa and Ranga in the prison over food. Ujagar cried a day before Billa and Ranga were executed and on hearing of their death could not eat for three days and because of the shock of what happened to Billa and Ranga and the fear that the same may happen to them, Ujagar's legs became

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numb. This is what he had to say finally to Chadha, "I will never come in the vicinity of the Jail. Never. Not even if Kartar is left behind. I can give my life for him but I will never come to the Jail to see him. I will send his wife, his children, my wife, my children but I will never come. *Bhagwan yeh raasta phir kabhi na dikhaye...*"

God granted his prayer and he did not have to come to the vicinity of the Jail again. Both Ujagar and Kartar were hanged a few months later.

*Amitabha Bhattacharya, a member of the IAS, is currently a collector in one of Andhra Pradesh districts.*

## Nineteenth Century Patna

Surendra Gopal

Patna in the 19th century : A Socio-Cultural Profile

pp. 128, *Naya Prokash, Calcutta*, 1982, Rs. 45.00

Reviewed by Sudhansu Mohanty

The study of urban history is of recent vintage. Urbanization with all its modern appurtenances seems to have reached maturity only recently and this corollarily has made the rural-urban dichotomy all the more glaring. Not to speak of the enormous changes wrought on the urban face through the western contrivances-modernization, industrialization, westernization. Not unoften the 'pleasing' urban face is rendered 'ugly'.

Patna, the erstwhile Pataligram, Kusumpur, Shrinagar, Pataliputra of ancient times, apart from its historic significance holds our breath for its unstinting staying power. Founded by Ajatasatru sometime in the 6th century B.C. it shot into resplendent glory when Chandragupta Maurya made it his capital in the 4th century B.C. And from thence onwards despite many vicissitudes it held its own till about the 10th century B.C. It suffered a prolonged period of neglect till the 16th century when Sher Khan Sur, the intrepid Afghan, rejuvenated it to its former importance.

Ralph Fitch, the first English traveller to India described Patna as 'a very long and great town' with bustling commercial activity. Once the British established their suzerainty in the whole of India, Patna became their most important entrepot in Eastern India after

Calcutta. And for the trans-Himalayan trade it became the premier centre. The European settlements with a Court of Appeal and Circuit, City Judge and Magistrate, Collector, Commercial President, Opium Agent, Provincial Battalion and their host of equipages gave Patna a new orientation. Slowly a new Patna grew up alongside the old historic Patna on the bank of the Ganges.

### PATNA, OLD & NEW

Surendra Gopal in his pioneering work *Patna in the Nineteenth Century* discusses at length the new Patna, juxtaposed on the old Patna. He expatiates on its development in response to the western impact, the synchomesh that was inevitable with the coming of the western education, values, laws and administration. "The old order had sufficiently decayed and the new order was emerging. The exploration promised a glimpse into the processes and motivations, whereby the new confronts, supplants sometimes strike a compromise with the old. This was the time when the full impact of the British rule became visible: the people deciding to accept some of its positive features such as the new learning and the new technology introduced by the alien rulers. Above all, the people were forced

to reconsider their old attitude towards life and society and adopt new ones, more suited to changed circumstances".

The new Patna was spawned on the Britishers' desire to stay off the local populace habiting the old city and the need for better hygiene. Yet they did not wish an establishment close to the Dinapore cantonment. They preferred rather the area from Golghar down to the then Company Bagh which roughly corresponds to the present day Patna Medical College Hospital. The plan map of 19th century Patna shows Mohalla Bakerganj, Muhar rampur, Muradpur, Afzalpur and Mahendru but surprisingly is silent about the Lawn or the present day Gandhi Maidan. Soon the population was to swell into the southern proximity; Buchanan mentions such southern habitations as Salempur, Langar Toli, Quazipur, Bhikna Pahari, Musallehpur and Lohani-pur. Apart from the English, the leading zamindars of Bihar also felt the necessity to gain a foothold in the new city and hence the gradual spilling over.

### COSMOPOLITAN

In 1854 the telegraph and postal services were introduced while the sixties saw quick-changing events with the introduction of railways. Patna also became the hub of western education, the lawyers as a tribe soon swelled while other professionals like doctors, engineers, journalists were not much behind. Literature was given a fillip: Patna was remarkable for being the centre of a cosmopolitan literature-Persian, Urdu, Hindi, English, Bengali and even such local dialects as Bhojpuri and Magadhi. Journalism took a newer flight with the import of the printing press, and newspaper and journals mushroomed.

"Patna Harkara" in Urdu and published on April 21, 1855 was the first journal to come out from Bihar. "Akhbar-i-Bihar", "Azimul Akhbar", "Chashm-i-Ilm", "Anise-Bihar", "Mushire-Bihar", "Institute", "Anis", "Al-Hadi", and "Al-Panch" were a few other impor-



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ant Urdu publications. Bihar Herald", "Bihar-Bandhu", "Bihar Patriot", "The Bihar Times", "Motherland" were the important periodicals in English. There was also the writing in the wall: the publication of caste journals such as "Dwija Patrika", "Kshatriya Patrika", "Khatra Hitaishi", "Kshatriya Samachar", "Teli Samachar", "Mahuri Mayank", "Siddhant Bhaskar" and "Kayastha Samachar".

Thus the new city burgeoned but not at the cost of the old. Whereas the new grew into an administrative and bureaucratic enclave, the old still remained the commercial and cultural heartland. The traditional Muslim and Hindu upper classes still remained in their ancestral homes in the old city while at times crossing over to new Patna for any business. There was a smooth communion between them.

## COMMUNAL HARMONY

Nineteenth century Patna was remarkable for its communal

harmony. The Muslims and the Hindus not only lived in peaceful co-existence but added to the richness of its cultural life. "The joint endeavour was possible because of the amity existing between the two. The Hindus participated in Muslim religious functions and extended patronage to Urdu and Persian by learning and writing in them. The Muslims wrote in Hindi and edited Hindi journals. Patna presented a perfect picture of communal harmony. Religion was never a bar to cordial social relations between the members of the two religious communities. Even when the rural areas around the city were engulfed in communal rioting in 1893, the city remained quiet". It would do the present day India a world of good to take a leaf out of this nineteenth century communal amity in Patna.

Gopal rightly observes that this good neighbourliness was made possible because the Muslims, unlike in other parts of India were among the first to take to western education and kept ahead of the Hindus and hence the competition for govern-

ment jobs was not so rife. Slowly, however, with the increase in the number of western educated Hindus the contradiction showed its ugly fangs and the communal equilibrium went askew. But that happened in the present century.

Another tension remained though. This gyrated around the Bengali versus the Bihari controversy. The Bengalis, quick to the exposure of western education, had travelled afar to Patna and had cornered cushy jobs in the bureaucracy and law courts. With the slow awakening of the Biharis steeped in western wisdom, regionalism inevitably arose. However, this did not overmuch hamper the quietude. For we find many domiciled Bengalis like Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya, Kali Kumar Mitra, adding their substantial bit to Hindi literature and to the totality of Bihar culture.

## THE CASTE BUSINESS

Despite the westernization however, the bulk of the people remained illiterate and with it

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religious and social conservatism stayed put. The lawyers who emerged the dominant professional class not only did not do their precious something to wring societal changes, but far from it, they reinforced the latent conservatism. To Gopal this was the undoing of western values. "The lawyers mostly relied on rural, land-holding clientele and hence found it expedient to appeal to caste and religious loyalties. For this reason they did not like to sever their rural ties even when they had achieved considerable professional success. The rational and scientific outlook was, by and large, still absent". This perhaps explains the sway of the spectre of the abominable caste system in Bihar. It may be surmised that with a broad scientific outlook this blight would not have cast so long a shadow. But then that is another story.

Gopal's monograph based on the hitherto untapped Urdu

and Bengali language sources, apart from the English deserves praise. Urdu language sources such as "Hayate Faryad", "Yad-gare Rozgar" and "Naqshe Paedar" etc have been used for the first time. Likewise, Bengali language source materials such as "Aghore-Prakash", "Smritir Saurabh-Smritir Gaurab" etc have been utilized for historical scholarship. This is most welcome. However, the insight provided is merely the tip of the proverbial ice-berg and much more could be built upon for a systematic and comprehensive construction of 19th century history of Patna. That, nonetheless, does not detract in any way from Gopal's endeavour. One would however wish that the printer's devils were kept to a minimum. It interferes with smooth reading otherwise.

*Sudhansu Mohanty belongs to the Defence Accounts Service and is currently posted at Meerut.*

would probably have combined the subject and title indices, thus saved some paper and printing costs.

There is a fourth index (pp.419-486) of book reviews that have appeared in the journal. This index also has a tripartite division into Author Index to Books reviewed, Subject Index to Books reviewed, and Reviewer Index. The last is bound to please those who write on books rather than write books. In this section also, the second subdivision is an unearned surplus. If a Subject Index was deemed essential here, it could easily have been incorporated into the main division and offered users the most complete subjectwise listing possible of books and articles in the same section.

Then there are three appendices (pp.487-492), of which the last is truly priceless. It is an errata list covering all twentythree volumes (until then) of the journal. That only thirteen errors have been found on so many pages is a rare tribute to the journal's printer and proofreaders. As with all Akademi publications, this volume too is well produced—clear rather than fancy printing on good paper, sensibly rather than stylishly laid out pages.

A publisher's note at the beginning gives a brief history and explains the purpose of the journal. Although written by the Secretary of the Akademi, much of it could have been reserved for the blurb—except, of course, for the acknowledgement to the Librarian who "has put in untiring efforts in preparing the Index mostly outside the normal office hours". I wonder why he should not have been permitted, even encouraged, to do this work within the normal office hours. The journal being an Akademi publication, the compilation of a cumulative index for it was surely legitimate labour for its Librarian. Doesn't the Secretary worry that if he admits that Akademi staff are capable of doing good work outside office hours, we might expect them to do the same inside those

## Compiling an Index

K.C. Dutta, Editor & Compiler

Cumulative Index to 'Indian Literature' (Vols. I—XXIII, 1957-80)  
pp. 492, Sahitya Akademi, 1981, Rs. 65.00.

Reviewed by Sujit Mukherji

Good reference volumes are not published often in our country—not, especially, in English—hence it is a pity that the volume under review has not received the kind of attention it richly merits. Such overlooking must partly be on account of the fact that the journal to which this volume is a cumulative index is itself not as well known as it should be. *Indian Literature* is the only journal on the subject in English that has led an uninterrupted life since it began publication in 1957. Such durability alone should have given it wider readership than it enjoys at present. For those who regularly read and use the journal, this cumulative index will act as an instrument for re-discovering things one may have missed. For

those who wish to be initiated to the subject (again, in English), the volume will be a handy and comprehensive source of information.

Compiled and edited by the Librarian of Sahitya Akademi, the volume gives ample proof of a librarian's love of accuracy, order and profusion. The latter may, indeed, have been overdone, because the main body of information provided (pp. 1-417) consists of an Author Index as well as a Subject Index as well as a Title Index. Granting that a cumulative index should be as cumulous as it can, some concern may have been reserved in a poor country for the economics of publishing. A more tight-fisted publisher than the Akademi



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hours as well ?

Then follows a compilers note, in which K.C.Dutt has explained the order and arrangement of entries. (Mr Dutt has helped me so often whenever I have used the Akademi library that I must now pay him the tribute of trying to improve upon his format.) The Author Index, we are told, includes "Author, Translator, Editor, Compiler, Reviewer, etc." Much later in the volume there is also a Reviewer Index, which obviously repeats part of this Author Index since reviewees have been included here. Would it not have been better to have compiled a separate Translators' Index, perhaps by language? That would have given some recognition to that neglected tribe (namely, translators), members of which generally live and die unsung and unwept. This journal depends a good deal on translators (from Indian languages into English) and an opportunity has been lost to do them proud.

A special feature of citations in the Author Index is the annotation that "has been supplied wherever an entry demanded it". The sample illustration given here is of a poem by Jibanananda Das, for which the annotation reads "Bengali poem tr. by Tarun Gupta". Such an annotation may cause confusion because, as published in the journal, it is not a Bengali poem but a poem or its approximation in English. A more accurate annotation would have been: "Poem trans. from orig. Bengali by Tarun Gupta". Which makes me think of another possibility—would a 'Translation Index' have filled a crying need, especially for those Indians who depend on English translations for their acquaintance with writing in an Indian language they do not know?

The Subject Index must have caused the compiler many sleepless hours. As he tells us, "Due to the complex variety of the subjects on the one hand and the lack of any suitable list of literary subject-headings on the other, the compiler has had to evolve

a number of subject-headings under each language and literature"; later he confesses, "There has been some inevitable overlapping of micro-thought in some of these subject-headings, resulting in the repetition of entries in certain cases". This is the least satisfactory part of the volume where a well-trained librarian probably needed the collaboration of an ill-trained literary person who would at least have worried about the classification becoming more orderly than useful.

Thus, for Tamil Literature we have fifteen different sub-subject-headings. Eight of these (Folk Literature, Language, Lullaby, Music, Novelette, Ramayana, Saint Literature, Satire) contain one entry each. In terms of print-area, these sub-headings use up more space than the entries below them. This cannot be rational, especially when such one-entry classifications have affected the whole range of our literature represented in this volume from Assamese to Urdu. Can we really accept a system of classification where classes of one have proliferated? Also, other subject-headings in the case mentioned above include 'Tamil Novelette', 'Tamil Poems', 'Tamil Short Stories', under which the novelette and poems and short stories are listed by title. Are these really "subjects"? Perhaps another index should have been compiled for creative writing, separating it from writing *about* poetry or fiction.

Another kind of compilatory zeal may be sampled under the

subject-heading "National Integration and Literature" (pp. 271-272). The list of 26 items entered here appears most impressive, more so because of the eminent writers named for each—Anand, Mulk Raj; Bendre, D.R.; Dinkar; Joshi, Umashanker; Kabir, Humayun; Radhakrishnan, S; and so on—until we notice that all 26 pieces bear the same title: "The Writer's role in national integration". This title is repeated again 26 times on pp. 415-417, but now in the Title Index. How did such a remarkable uniformity of titles come about? To find the answer, we shall have to turn to the relevant issue of the journal (V : 1 : 1962) and discover that all these pieces belong to an informal symposium organised by the Akademi in connection with that year's awards-presentation ceremony, at which writers were invited to make statements on the given subject. The pieces reappear 26 times more in the Author Index, with a brief annotation (the same one) at each of these appearances. Altogether, this relatively slight material occupies five pages and, elsewhere, 104 lines of the volume. Instead of such ubiquity for what are really 'reported' statements, it should have been enough to give just one entry in the Title Index, identify it as a report on a symposium, and name all the writers who contributed.

The Title Index, having required the least thought in its making, gives no scope for comment. The Reviewer Index, made me curious to find out who were the more indefatigable.

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Prabhakar Machwe (former Secretary of the Akademi) comfortably leads the field with 42 reviews; next in order are A.N. Raina (27), D. Anjaneyulu (17) and R.S. Yadav (16). Of these 'authors' Mr Anjaneyulu is not to be found again in the volume.

Finally, for purposes of ego-satisfaction, I searched for my own name. One entry I found in the Author Index is annotated thus: "On the poetry of Sudhin-

dranath Datta based on his *The world of Twilight*". Those who know the book will realise that this annotation is wrong. I look forward therefore to the second edition of the volume, where this error will surely be rectified in an Errata Index for the First Edition.

*Sujit Mukherjee works for Orient Longmans and is currently based in Hyderabad.*

## A Compulsive Writer

John Kenneth Galbraith

A life in Our Times : Memoirs

Boston, 1981

Reviewed by Purshotam Mehra

Among my miscellaneous reading this year which included such mixed fare as A. Appadorai, *Select Documents on India's Foreign Policy and Relations 1947-72*, D.P. Choudhury, *The North-East Frontier of India 1865-1914*, Mani Kamarkar, *British Paramountcy*, Ravi Malhotra, *Afghan Search for Identity*, besides a longish manuscript, beautifully turned, on British India's relations with Tibet over the quarter century Curzon had something to do with it, one stands out in my memory. It is the autobiography, (*Memoirs, A Life in Our Times*, 1981) if you please, of a distinguished economist academic, author, administrator, journalist and diplomat, all rolled in one: John Kenneth Galbraith's sum-up of his amazingly rich and varied life.

A compulsive writer, Galbraith has two remarkable assets—his interests and affections are not inhibited in any narrow sense either to his discipline or to his country. Born a Canadian, he acquired American citizenship but has lived, worked and travelled in such diverse and disparate lands as India, Africa, Latin America, China, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. As a Harvard don for over three decades who has

taught at some of the most prestigious seats of learning the world over, his academic credentials are unimpeachable. And yet his writing is singularly unpedantic; his understanding and sympathies broad and universal; his sense of humour robust, if also infectious. Galbraith writes with a refreshing detachment; is no respecter of persons, much less of institutions or governments; suffers from no known biases of colour or creed and in so far as his interests range over a wide spectrum, makes for fascinating reading.

It is a measure of his depth and range that Galbraith's books (more than twenty titles are listed on the reverse of the title page, which include such near-classics as *The Affluent Society*, *The New Industrial State* and *The Age of Uncertainty*) cover a vast canvass. There is economics for sure but also public affairs, travelogue, the fine arts—*Indian Painting*, in concert with M.S. Randhawa—and even two works of fiction, *The Scotch* and *The Triumph*. Because of his remarkable clear-headedness, well-chiselled sentences and an apt turn of phrase, they sell well and are known to run into several editions. Within the cons-

traints of a brief review my purpose is to share with the reader some of the pleasure, nay enthusiasm, I experienced while reading this voluminous tome, 550 odd pages of cold print in large (Royal octavo) size and almost from one cover to the other.

### ABOUT HIS FRATERNITY

It might do well to start with what the Professor has to say about his own fraternity. Of one of his colleagues at Harvard and a chairman of the Department:

It had been some years since Burbank had read a book, but he had an opinion to offer on every book mentioned to him, including non-existent books by imaginary authors.

With what yardstick do the academics rate their peers:

Those passing judgment on a scholar avow their interest in the quality of his published work, but, in the end, most settle for counting the printed pages.

A word on the ubiquitous seminars and the their almost inevitable concomitant, the long afternoon sessions:

Discussion in all higher education is the vacuum which is used to fill a vacuum.

As to the ego, two brief quotes may help to deflate and cut it to size:

A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.

Or again,

The occupational hazard of any professor is didactic prolixity and I early learned to look for the warning signs.

What of the stains of a professorial conscience:

A lawyer, professionally a mouthpiece, can defend the improbable, impalpable or the criminal without being supposed to believe what he says. A professor cannot; he is expected to be sincere. If he says what he does not believe, he is a hypocrite.

To succeed, an academic must sometimes seek to econo-



mise on the mental effort that he requires of his students. If too great, it invites hopelessness and rejection.

Of the temptations that cross his path :

Professors fresh from the academic relative squalour of offices are greatly attracted to Washington (New Delhi !), to the leather chairs, expansive desks, thoughtfully wasted space, the framed presidential commissions and the other decor of high officialdom.

Galbraith is by no means oblivious of the perils attendant upon the academic in public life :

Civil administration is by discussion and consensus ; military action is by information and command. The latter has a rewarding simplicity for all civilians and especially for anyone from the discursive traditions of academic life. This is why few men become so dangerously warlike as the academic figure who is plunged into military affairs.

Here as elsewhere complacency would be dangerous for

Nothing so protects an error as absence of readers or understanding.

#### THE SCIENCE OF ECONOMICS

Of his own melancholy, 'dismal' as Carlyle called it, science of economics, JKG has some revealing things to say :

In all neoclassical orthodoxy, the profit motive is vital—it is the simple muscular force moving and invigorating the whole economic machine. Yet as the corporate sector matures, power passes to the technostucture. And so visible is this process that even the orthodox have long conceded that the modern corporation is management controlled.

Asked by a persistent questioner in Poland about the difference between communism and capitalism, the Professor was brutally frank, albeit no less profound :

Well, I will tell you. Under capitalism man exploits man.

Under communism, it is just the reverse.

No wonder

What is common to the large enterprise in both systems is the inevitability of collective decision-making and guidance in which numerous specialised participants contribute the needed knowledge and experience.

And what of the changing perspective :

Wants, it was long assumed in economics, emerged from instinct wholly internal to the consumer. With lessened urgency their source became external ; they are the product of salesmanship, advertising and fashion.

How come that, for the average reader, the subject is so abstruse : for most part hard to comprehend ; sometimes difficult to read ? Without much ado, Galbraith avows his personal

conviction that there is no idea associated with the subject that cannot, with sufficient effort, be stated in clear English. The obscurity that characterises professional economic prose does not derive from the difficulty of the subject. It is result of incomplete thought ; or it reflects a priestly desire to differentiate one's self from the plain world of the layman ; or it stems from a fear of having one's inadequacies found out.

#### STINT AS A JOURNALIST

His brief stint as a journalist with the still prestigious *Fortune* taught Galbraith a thing or two. The journalist's world, he concluded, is one lived from day to day :

The discipline of deadline and economy of words that journalism forces on its practitioners...its routine demands leave little room for the slow parturition of the imagination which alone could produce works of great creative art.

As if to underscore the point A journalist reads a great deal but most of it is ephemeral that

meet his professional needs... With every passing year, one is oppressed by the thought of the unread books and the great classics, old and new, that pass one like ships in the night.

Nor did anonymity bother him, initially at any rate :

Only rarely did one receive a byline. This not everyone regretted, for, as on all the *Time*, Inc. publications, there was often a dichotomy between personal belief and what got published, so identification with the result was not sought.

Later however the Professor in him asserted itself :

There was a strong feeling that *Fortune* was kept around business offices and better homes as a prestige item and not read. Surveys always showed otherwise...I rarely encountered anyone who had read anything I had written...A writer gradually accumulates reputation and associated capital from his writing but at *Fortune*, as at *Time*, this didn't happen...This I come to think unrewarding.

#### ON THE FRINGES

Though by no means active in politics, JKG has over the years been an active and articulate Democrat who besides being an FDR New Dealer, fought and campaigned vigorously for Adlai Stevenson. Later he reneged on the once defeated Democratic hopeful and supported the winning horse in John F. Kennedy whom he had the satisfaction of seeing safely ensconced in the Oval Office at the White House. His years in India as US Ambassador was the reward for his pains. Subsequently, Galbraith was on the right side of Lyndon B. Johnson and understandably, on the wrong of Richard M. Nixon. Casually brought up as a Presidential candidate, he might more convincingly have been a successful Democrat Senator from Vermont (1964) or even Massachusetts (1972) but shied away from the rough and tumble of an election :

Again, the book on which I was



at work stood in the way. Also, no doubt, natural caution...In the Johnson landslide of that autumn (1964) I might not have lost.

In the final count thus Galbraith remained an activist but on the fringes; insulated from the cut and thrust as no doubt the ups and downs of an active political career. Nonetheless since he came to know men and things at the highest levels of government, the impressions on his sensitive mind were at once intimate and deeply etched.

The *raison d'être* in all politics is personal aggrandisement:

Many people seek to alter, mostly to enhance, their own personalities and in politics as also in academic life the impulse is endemic...Many are prima donnas, more are self-identified saviours of the Republic.

In its essence the game is simplicity itself: abjure all difficult, intractable problems and own up only those that help you with your voters:

In politics as in the vestry, one does not raise difficult questions, involving divinity, the Trinity or even the personal dedication of fellow members to the Ten Commandments...To win is to be affirmed in truth by the voters; to lose means only that one's convictions are being tested.

Updating Cavour who called it the art of the possible:

Politics is not the art of the possible. It consists in choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable.

In plain terms, the game is to keep the image, alive and shining, of a better, brighter, tomorrow:

The existing depredations are a matter of harsh experience. The alternative is hypothetical: it exists in promises, oratory and hope and these always seem, until practical experience arrives, relentlessly and unqualifiedly good.

Shades doubtless of the 'New Society' and, nearer home, of 'Garibi Hatao' and the 'Government that works.'

Of some of the principal *dramatis personae* whom he knew

at first hand, two come out almost live: Adlai Stevenson and Lyndon B. Johnson. Of the former:

(he) spent his life in a persuasive effort to present himself as he was not. The grace with which he pictured himself as a harried, wavering intellect lost in the harsh, demanding world of politics was one of his most engaging qualities.

His own about turn from Adlai to JFK in the Democratic Presidential nominations for 1960 was gravely resented:

I was regarded by Stevenson supporters, a Kennedy opportunist and also morally and ethically leperous...They denounced my apostasy with a resourcefulness of language that left me not only silent but stunned...

As for JFK he made it, having promised 'in thoughtfully unspecific terms' to get 'his country moving again.'

Between John and Jackie (Jacqueline) Kennedy, the latter concerned herself exclusively with dress and related artifacts of life...These only slightly enhanced her beauty and they served if anything to disguise an alert and penetrating mind. She had always a sharper view than her husband of the people around the presidency and while Kennedy leaned to charity she leaned to truth.

Two revealing vignettes of LBJ and both so characteristic. Informed that Stevenson, then US Ambassador and principal spokesman at the United Nations had collapsed (July 1965) without much prior warning in London:

That Stevenson. Why did he have to die right now? He was always off in his timing. Who am I going to get to take his place?

Galbraith had pleaded with the White House that the then army junta in Athens spare the neck of a well-known economist of his acquaintance. The President deferred:

Call up Ken Galbraith and tell that I've told those Greek bastards to lay off that son of a bitch—whoever he is.

#### RECALLING INDIA

The Professor's impressions of India and Indians are relayed at some length in his *Ambassador's Journal*: here it may suffice to refer to a few. Of Jawaharlal Nehru whom he came to know reasonably intimately:

He did not like economics. He had been taught that given a sufficient depth of socialist faith, economic success would result. So following the frequent custom of American Presidents when beset by economic problems, he took refuge in international affairs.

More than books Nehru liked handsome, intelligent and entertaining women...Barbara Ward Johnson, the author and economist; Angie Dickinson, the film actress; and members of the Robert Joffrey Ballet who danced for him...

In the years he knew him

Nehru's mind turned not to Gandhi and the struggle for independence; it reverted to his yet earlier experience when, in England, he had been with or near men and women of compelling interest...The world of R.H. Tawney, the Webbs and of Trinity College Cambridge. Once he said of himself that he would be the 'last Englishman to rule India.'...

Discussing the then Prime Minister's dilemma in the context of the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict:

Nothing in life had prepared him (Nehru) for military decisions; he believed that a modern civilised statesman could remain above such barbarism. And especially he believed that India could remain apart from the differences and tensions between the communist and non-communist worlds. He could be the arbiter above the battles. That however was not to be:

From the psychic wounds of that unnecessary war in the Himalayas he never quite recovered. He once said to me of Lyndon Johnson, 'He is the kind of politician I understand. He would have understood



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LBJ's despair in the aftermath of Vietnam.

Galbraith's account of the 1962 conflict to which he was a witness and which may be said to register the high watermark of the crisis situation we experienced, does not tilt thunderingly on the Indian side. He is a little less than sure about New Delhi's claims on the border and even though refraining from toeing the Peking line is certain the latter has a better case than we allow :

The Indian side had a huge brief on its side of the case. It was, as FDR said of our briefs on price control, too heavy to lift. And it did not convey a wholly detached tone.

On November 19 (1962) Word came that General Kaul had been captured, and President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, on whom I was calling that evening with Senators Mike Mansfield of Montana and Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, said quietly, 'It is, unfortunately, untrue.'

#### BUREAUCRATIC ACHIEVEMENT

For the administrator, and, apart from a host of important positions held, he was the price commodity czar in Washington during the years of World War II, Galbraith has some useful tips. Though retaining their essential flavour, I have in reproducing them abbreviated only where necessary :

- (i) Either have the President behind you or cultivate that impression... ;
- (ii) Use the press in a wholly forthright manner... ;
- (iii) Make your views widely and persuasively known... by means of the printed word... There is no limit to the number of people who can be reached by well-argued paper... ;
- (iv) Given the choice between keeping the confidence of your friends and appeasing your enemies, never hesitate (i.e. in rejecting the latter course)... ;

(v) Anger and indignation must usefully be simulated but should never be real. They impair judgment... ;

(vi) On foreign policy, as on economic policy, the essence of wisdom lies not in being too sure... nonetheless for bureaucratic success one must cultivate an outward air of assurance... ;

(vii) Adopt, where, appropriate, a modest aspect of menace... ;

(viii) If at all possible, be mentally accommodated to catching the plane out of Washington on any given morning. Nothing so weakens the position of a senior public official as the knowledge that he so loves or is otherwise so committed to do his job that he will always, in the end, come to terms ..

With some minor emendations as substituting 'Prime Minister' for President and 'New Delhi' for Washington, one may discover that the prescription for bureaucratic achievement retailed above has a wider applicability.

#### VIII

Characteristically JKG is both entertaining and illuminating on a host of subjects. Space alone inhibits.

Of developing countries and their penchant for the most sophisticated armaments :

Weaponry, we will one day learn, must be related in its complexity to the sophistication and competence of the country that seeks to use it.

For some of these 'jungle regimes' where the 'writ of the government runs only as far as the airport', things have turned out to be so different from what the 'experts' presumed.

Communism was far more factional and divisive in the poor countries than conventional cold war doctrine assumed. The notion of the great

monolith so central to the system of the Dulles brothers, the Pentagon, Dean Rusk and even some of my Harvard colleagues was an artificial construct, one that served only fashionable discussion.

As it is

Experience of the post-colonial world is a superb antidote to the global strategic mind.

Of radicals and those that are not :

The trouble with radicals is that they read only radical literature ; and the trouble with conservatives is that they do not read anything.

Sad as it is

Over most of history public authority has been deeply inimical-its agents and officers arriving over the mud-tracks or the dikes, have come for taxes, food, pillage, recruits, rarely for anything benign...

Of a presidential campaign and its slogan mongering :

At a rally at the university of Wisconsin Madison she (Scotty Fitzgerald Lanhan) rang a brilliant change on the (Barry) Goldwater campaign slogan, 'In your heart you know he is right.' It was, 'In your ass you know it's just gas. It brought down the house'

Of India and Indians :

Of all the races on the earth, the Indians have the most nearly inexhaustible appetite for oratory.

Or again,

Given two Indian communists, there is a certain likelihood that there will be two communist parties.

Of state visits of which we have more than our due share-in the head-count both of arrivals and departures

(These) are almost entirely a pleasurable perquisite of high office. They are greatly enjoyed by those making them.

Of administrative delays :

the delay inherent in seeking ministerial or other higher approval is uniquely damaging. A wrong decision is not forever ; it can always be reversed.



The losses from a delayed decision are forever ; they can never be retrieved.

Will our great political bosses and the Mandarins in New Delhi, as no doubt in the state capitals, take heed ?

For the 'undoubted volume and the alleged quality of his work' :

There is a less self-centred explanation. That is Andrea Williams...a handsome blond woman, a member of an old Rhode Island family, a recent graduate of Smith, who was of superb humor and, it later developed, of enduring tolerance...(She) and I formed "a partnership that has lasted at this writing for twenty-two years...Andrea has managed my office and a succession of talented assistants who have loved their employment because they loved her. She has kept a watching brief on our household economy, on our friends and their needs, on my publishing contracts and commitments, and she has assumed charge of my travel, bank account and income tax... But most of all she has been my editor. Few writers in any language have been so favoured. My spelling is often impressionistic ; my punctuation is erratic ; so more rarely is my syntax ; my memory though generally good, is subject to lapse, often under conditions of greatest certainty ; my sense of taste is fallible ; and so too is my impression of what is or is not clear. All these faults are corrected to near perfection by Andrea Williams. Nothing, literally nothing, that I have written for publication in the last twenty-two years has escaped her scrutiny.

What candour ; what a heart-warming tribute !

#### ROUNDING OFF

For fear one may go on and on and, in the bargain, invite the editor's as also perhaps the reader's, not ill-merited wrath, it is time to call it a day. It may do well to

round off with JKG's not unattractive personal credo.

Professor Galbraith's interests one may be sure are neither cribbed nor cabined :

I have never understood why one's affections must be confined, as once with women, to a single country.

His own 'first law of intelligence' may be of interest in lands outside his own :

You cannot know the intentions of a Government that does not know them itself.

His faith is simple :

As an extreme idealist I am in favour of lost causes. But I wonder if we should lose our lost causes more than once.

And his credo :

I've felt that one should hold some part of one's self in reserve, never be too completely sure of being right.

Of men and Memoirs :

I have noticed that those who write their memoirs have difficulty in knowing when, on public matters, they should stop. The obvious stopping point is when the view is from the stands.

And the long and short of it all :

Between adolescent exuberism and eventual disutility, an individual has at best around fifty years to come to terms with the world around him, enjoy it and respond as conscience or ambition requires to public responsibilities.

How far short of the long haul do some of us eventually settle for ?

*Purshotam Mehra was Professor of History at the Punjab University and now lives in retirement at Chandigarh.*

## A Pioneering Study

Barbara Daly Metcalf

Islamic Revival in British India : Deoband, 1860-1900,

pp. xiv+386, Princeton University Press (Distributed in India by Oxford University Press, Delhi), 1982, Rs. 225.00.

Reviewed by Imtiaz Ahmed

The ulema have been a vital force in recent political history throughout the Islamic world. Political developments in Turkey, Egypt and Iran as well as other Islamic countries exemplify the powerful influence that the ulema have been capable of exerting over national affairs and determining the shape of political events in the face of secularizing movements towards modernization and social changes. Even within this country, the ulema played a crucial and powerful role in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries though ultimately success attended the political movement represented by the 'secular' leadership that capitalized upon the political appeal of Islamic self-identity.

So far Cantwell Smith's short

essay on the role of the ulema in Indian Politics in C.H. Philips edited *Politics and Society in India* had been the only academically serious discussion of the ulema as a socio-political category though their role in political life has been dealt with by others including Zia-ul-Hasan Faruqi's *Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan*. Metcalf's book is thus the first comprehensive and full-length treatment of the ulema in the Indian context and adds one more missing piece to the socio-cultural profile of the Indo-Muslim community whose breakaway despite the solid support and commitment of its ulema to the ideal of a united India remains one of the enigmas of recent Indian political history.



## PAINSTAKING

The book is the outcome of painstaking research and exploration of historical source materials extending over almost a decade. It brings together an extremely rich array of information culled from archival as well as vernacular sources on the various roles the ulema played during the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries and the nature and extent of their influence over Indo-Muslim masses. Perhaps it is the richness of information and source materials more than anything else that distinguishes this book as a substantial and welcome contribution to recent Indian as well as Indo-Muslim cultural history.

While going through this book one could not help comparing it at times with David Lelyveld's *Aligarh's First Generation*, which appeared nearly four years earlier. The two books are remarkably comparable in respect of their meticulousness, the richness of historical source materials and the exploration of the vernacular, biographical and institutional records in delineating the evolution and development of the institutions they describe. Perhaps the difference between them lies in their sweep and their literary and stylistic élan. Lelyveld's book had a flair and sweep which invested it with a deep literary appeal and allowed the reader to read a great deal beyond Aligarh about the historical context in which that institution evolved and developed. On the other hand, Metcalf's book has a certain austerity of style and presentation and the argument that it presents tends to be narrow, limiting the possibility of its extension to the wider society within which the ulema were invariably operating.

## TWO FOLD OBJECTIVE

Metcalf's objective in the book is two-fold : to trace out the historical context in which the ulema emerged as powerful religious agents and to elucidate the roles that they played in orienting

Muslims to the emerging social and political situation following the decline of Muslim political power and establishment of British rule. She also provides us, as part of her second objective, with a detailed historical account of the theological seminary at Deoband which became one of the leading institutions of the ulema from about the middle of the nineteenth century and today ranks in academic prestige second only to *Alhazr*, the principal centre of Islamic theological learning in the Islamic world. This is a wide canvas to try to cover and it goes to Metcalf's credit that she has been able to accomplish the job with a great deal of success.

The book divides itself into two parts. The first part comprising two chapters focusses on the ulema in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and discusses the kind of response the ulema evinced to the series of changes that made themselves felt following the decline of Muslim power in India. Essentially, the point that emerges from the discussion in this part is that with the decline of Muslim political authority a void or a kind of vacuum had been created in Indo-Muslim social and cultural organization and the ulema moved in to fill that deep and remarkable void.

Shah Waliullah's religious reactions as well as those of his son, Saiyid Abdul Aziz, who stands at the head of the Deoband religious tradition, as well as those of other schools of the ulema at this time were thus an almost natural response to the political and cultural vacuum created by the establishment of British rule. It enabled them to articulate a strategy of cultural and political survival in a socio-political set up where they were no longer in command of political authority and contingencies of the socio-cultural situation required them to articulate a new orientation for religious sustenance. Particularly instructive in this part is the comparative treatment that Metcalf presents of the Bareilly, Firangi Mahali and what was eventually to emerge as the Deobandi

ulema traditions and the points of their convergence and contention.

## DOCUMENTATION

The second part of the book comprising the bulk of the book is a discussion of the Deoband Theological Seminary and the multifarious roles that the ulema played later on. She details the founding and later evolution of the Deoband Seminary, the nature of its organization, the social and cultural background of its founding fathers as well as those who later came to teach or study at it, the vast and extended institutional network that dispersal of its alumni into the forecorners of the subcontinent enabled it to evolve and the educational role that the ulema were able to perform once they were able to evolve an organizational framework with the Deoband seminary as its centre. The ulema were prolific writers and publicists and the Deoband seminary was a meticulous record keeper. Metcalf has been able to draw upon the Urdu sources, biographies of prominent ulema and the records kept by the Deoband Seminary to bring both the Institution and its staff and alumni to life.

Metcalf's emphasis throughout the book is upon the reformist role that the ulema cast out for themselves and the subsequent elucidation of her argument has been shaped largely by this over-riding concern. Questioning the popular view that views the ulema as essentially a conservative force, she goes on to demonstrate that the ulema in the nineteenth century played an essentially reformist role. Accepting the sacred literature as the fountain head of the principles whereby a Muslim must order his life, the ulema reinterpreted and adapted Koranic preachings and provided guidance to the countless illiterate Muslims in the small towns and villages who were now left with no one but the locally available ulema for a definition of being good Muslims. Education of the masses was thus, evidently, the most crucial role that the ulema played and the performance of this



role led them into others such as those of debators, publicists and spiritual leaders.

#### AS A SOCIAL CATEGORY

There can be no doubt that the ulema played a crucial role in the sustenance of Islam as the personal faith of millions of Muslims in India at a time when they had no authoritative guides to turn to and their use of Urdu, which Metcalf discusses at some length, was certainly very instrumental in this respect. Even so, her treatment of the ulema as a social category does raise some questions. The first is that of homogeneity. Metcalf's treatment tends to give the impression that the ulema in the nineteenth century constituted a fairly homogeneous social category who were able to work out a fair degree of consensus both on their interpretation of contemporary events and the ways to deal with them. She does refer to the doctrinal disputes among the ulema or their division between Bareilly and Deobandi, but the salience and depth of these schisms appears on the whole to have been somewhat underplayed. Even if they were all reformists, they were not all so to the same extent. Moreover, they were competing between themselves for allegiance and support of their followers who not only bolstered up their social base but also afforded a wider clientele in the most extended socio-political sense. Metcalf is able to treat the ulema as a fairly homogeneous lot perhaps due to the fact that she is writing from the outside and looks at the ulema in the overall national context where these schisms and conflicts were considerably restrained.

#### AUTONOMY OF THE ULEMA

The second point relates to the autonomy of the ulema. Metcalf's treatment somehow appears to render ulema as an autonomous entity who acted very much on their convictions quite impervious to the social circumstances and the tendencies displayed by the com-

munity at large. Or, to put the point somewhat differently, the ulema in Metcalf's treatment seem always to be shaping the community, rarely being shaped by the community's own reactions and responses which I have reason to suspect did not always conform to the ulema's own perceptions and pre-dispositions. Perhaps, a point that would have been worth examining in this connection would be the hiatus that existed between the ulema and their clients and how that hiatus was mediated. In short, the question that needs equally to be investigated is how and how far the ulema were able to modulate their voices to the tune that the Muslim masses in the towns and countryside were playing or whether the ulema were actually also calling the tune always.

Of course, to raise these questions is merely to indicate further issues in terms of which analysis of the ulema in the Indian context may be attempted. To press them in the context of Metcalf's book beyond reasonable point would be to insist that she should have written a different kind of book than the one she had actually set out to write. Metcalf's book has the merit of containing information and indication of sources which subsequent researchers interested in taking up these questions might tap. It is hoped that this comprehensive work will inspire more narrowly focussed and specific studies that elucidate

the constraints and compulsions that were a part of being an *alim* in the nineteenth century and the limits that determined the role that the ulema as a social category could accomplish.

The establishment of British rule produced three principal cultural and intellectual responses among Indian Muslims. These were the Anglo-Arabic Muhammadan College at Aligarh, the Deoband Theological Seminary at Saharanpur and the Nadwat-ul-ulema at Lucknow. The Anglo-Arabic college was so far the only Muslim cultural and intellectual response that had received book-length treatment, having been the subject of David Lelyveld's excellent work, *Aligarh's First Generation*. Metcalf's book has completed the discussion of Deoband. The Nadwat-ul-ulema at Lucknow has still to receive detailed scholarly treatment though in many ways it too was highly important. It is hoped that someone will soon take up a detailed study of the Nadwat-ul-ulema and thereby complete the analysis of all the three principal cultural and intellectual responses that resulted from the decline of Muslim political authority in India.

*Imtiaz Ahmad teaches in the School of Social Sciences at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.*

## Books Received

(A brief notice here does not preclude a detailed review later on)

Trikha, R. N. and Arreja, Manmohan Singh. *Lisamy and Development Oriented Education*. Delhi, Harnam, 1983. xxiv, 159 p. Rs. 80.00.

The authors do not just bemoan the present system of education but suggest specific measures to restructure it to suit the needs of a developing society.

Paliwal, M.R. *Social change and Education: Present and future*. Delhi, uppal, 1984. X, 354 p. Rs 175.00.

Deals with the trends, needs and innovations in Indian society and education in the perspective of the world social and educational scenario.



March 16, 1984

INDIAN BOOK CHRONICLE

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K. Natwar Singh

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Pia Nazareth

viii+128 Rs. 75



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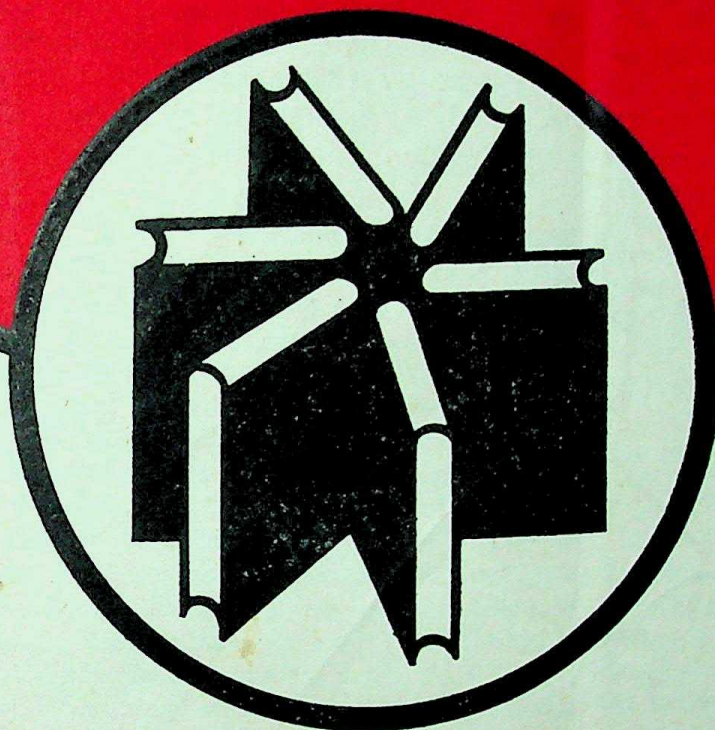
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# indian book chronicle

NEWS AND  
REVIEWS



A VIVEK TRUST FORTNIGHTLY

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Mulk Raj Anand

The Bubble

**Alok Sinha**

G R Madan and  
Tara Madan

Village Development in India: A  
Sociological Approach

**Ayyappa Paniker**

Romen Basu

Rustling of Many Winds

**K Venkatachari**

D V K Raghavacharyulu

The Song of the Red Rose and  
other Poems

**Balgovind Baboo**

Rita Khanna

Agricultural Mechanisation and  
Social Change in India

**Ram Singh**

S C Datt, T Pandey,  
K V Joshi and  
S B Sriyastava

Sources of India's Strength:  
Foundation Course—I

**Dhires Bhattacharyya**

World Development Report 1983

**John Lall**

Janet Rizvi

Ladakh, Crossroads of  
High Asia



## New from Oxford

### South Indian History and Society

*Studies from Inscriptions A.D. 850-1800*

NOBORU KARASHIMA

A significant feature of this important study of South Indian history is the close examination of contemporary inscriptional data relating to specific social and economic issues. Inscriptions of the Chola and Vijayanagara period in South Indian History constitute almost a surfeit of riches when compared to earlier period. This provides scholars with substantial material on which to base historical generalizations, but also allows for a range of historical interpretations, especially regarding the nature of political authority, land ownership and irrigation, and the role of the temple as a ritual and social centre. Professor Karashima in these essays assesses these varied views, even when he does not participate directly in the debate. The work illustrates the application of new methods of analysis to data which not only light up new facets of the past, but are also the source of generating questions for further research.

Rs 140

### Sheep Production in the Tropics

A B CARLES

This book has a strong practical emphasis, although it considers the basic principles on which all management systems must be based. The author gives a brief description of the major components of sheep production and their ecology and reviews the 'sheep environment', including aspects of climate, vegetation, disease, wildlife, and socio-economic factors. He describes the major breeds of sheep and types relevant to the tropics, considering the main biological characters that affect productivity.

Rs 45

### Lenin and the Problem of Marxist Peasant Revolution

ESTHER KINGSTON-MANN

While most western studies of Lenin have concentrated on the urban proletariat, the author offers a systematic analysis of Lenin's agrarian peasant policy by examining the evolution of Lenin's thought on the Russian peasantry in theory and in the potential reality of a Marxist revolution. The book constitutes a definitive study of the peasant question until the 1917 revolution and forms a major contribution to the study of the origins and development of Soviet Communism.

Rs 160

### Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition

*A Case Study of West Bengal*

E. ALAN MORINIS

That man has so commonly and in such different ways been a seeker gives pilgrimage a significance that has only recently aroused interest in scholars. Why, when there is need for action, should it be pilgrimage rather than a visit to the doctor or a pleasure trip? An important aim of this study is to review and evaluate encompassing theories on pilgrimage in the light of data from Bengal; to show how pilgrimage can only be understood in terms of the meaning a culture ascribes to journeys of all kinds to God.

Rs 150

### Flowers of the Himalaya

OLEG POLUNIN AND ADAM STANTON

This is the first book of its kind for identifying the wild flowers of the Himalaya, from Kashmir and Ladakh to the Nepal-Sikkim border in the east. The authors describe some 1500 species found mostly above 1200 m in the upper valleys, the hills and higher mountainous regions to about 5500 m. There are 694 colour photographs of plants taken in the field, and 315 line drawings of plants made in the field or from herbarium specimens. More than a thousand species are illustrated in total. Brief descriptions of types of climate, geology, soils, altitude effects, and the activities of man and his animals are also included in the book.

Rs 350

### An Indian Rural Economy 1880-1955

*The Tamilnad Countryside*

CHRISTOPHER JOHN BAKER

This work is aimed towards the point where the interests of economists, geographers, historians and other social scientists converge on the question of agrarian change in the economically poorer parts of the world. It traces the history of an Indian rural economy from the era of high colonialism to independence and 'development'.

Rs 165



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# Indian Book Chronicle

Vol. IX, No. 9, May 1, 1984

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Indian Book Chronicle  
2/26, Sarva Priya Vihar  
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EDITOR : AMRIK SINGH

## A Search for Form

So articulate, aware and, in the good sense of the word, self-conscious a writer as Mulk Raj Anand is always likely to raise the hackles of his critics. He breaks the rules of the game, is expansive and intense at the same time, mixes autobiography and fiction in lethal proportions and, worst sin of all, writes novels that read more like disquisitions than serious works of art. *The Bubble* will not enhance his reputation either with those who expect a novel to provide cosy bromides to kill the day's pain, or those whose idea of the novel hasn't strayed very much from the ordered but tortuous symmetries derived from James and his critical acolytes. I have heard Anand admirers on the Eng. Lit cocktail circuit complain of his garrulity, intrusive curiosity and his refusal to let the story unfold itself without the authorial prodding. His academic critics pompously flay him for what they regard his undisciplined, overcharged and occasionally overbearing narrative lapses. Even George Orwell, who reacts sympathetically to the fiction, damns the author with faint praise in the end.

### EXPLORING FRESH TERRITORY

But the real Anand eludes. Whereas his contemporaries among the Indian-English novelists stay content with encapsulating experience into either an olympian benevolence of attitude (Narayan), or plain snow-capped wisdom (Raja Rao), Anand alone in novel after novel assaults fresh territory and adopts unconventional narrative strategies to jolt us into a recognition of our littleness as well as grandeur. No Indian novelist writing in English has shown such earnestness about man's place in history and society as has Anand. No other writer (except Salman Rushdie in a different way) has displayed as much crowded exuberance which often captures the very texture of life, its chaotic but significant urges, its aspiring though gloom-laden drives—in fact the whole debris of inhumanity and charade lurking beneath sleek social forms.

In what is undoubtedly a parochial intellectual dimness of much Indian-English writing, Anand's novels, despite their faults (the worst being long stretches of dud prose which one can collect by the trowelful in *The Bubble*), engage us at several planes

Mulk Raj Anand, *The Bubble*, pp. 604, Arnold-Heinemann, 1984'  
Rs. 125.00.



May 1, 1984

at once. Apart from their imaginative truthfulness, it is their fierce dialectical movement and ruthless pursuit of ideas that gives them vitality and power. What makes them portents of our times (and this is true of the entire Saga of Man series of which *The Bubble* is the most recent part), is not simply the fact that a young aspiring man is exploring so passionately the dilemmas of his own generation, but that the novelist himself displays a remarkable capacity for changes of tone—ranging from satirical even mocking observation of manners and people to grave measured speculations on metaphysical issues. Mulk Raj Anand is a wanderer in different and even uncanny regions of experience who revels in staying unsettled in any fixed groove.

#### PASSIONATE ENGAGEMENT

Anand uses ideas as Shaw used them in his plays, dramatically, in perpetual collision with each other. In Krishan Chander Azad, the chief protagonist of *The Bubble*, he has created a character who lives not only through his emotions (and what an emotional guzzler he is!) but also through the ideas that dominate his intellectual being. In *Confession of a Lover* to which the present novel is a sequel, we left Azad at the threshold of a momentous decision to seek answers to his personal dilemmas in England.

*The Bubble* opens with Azad writing letters to his college friend Noor in which he poses the question that found no answers back home; questions of identity, existence and man's place in the scheme of things. In spite of Mama Dayal's native sagacity and aunt Devki's home-spun instinctive response to young Azad's yearnings, there is a deep dissatisfaction in him which drives him out of the sheltered assumptions of his home life into the wounding imbrolios of intellectual and emotional strife. Clearly, Azad's dilemmas are such that no fixed forms would contain them. They are personal and yet they reflect the larger urge to pluck the heart of the unknown. The fierceness hinted above comes from this passionate engagement with metaphysical and human dilemmas. As a student of philosophy rooted in Humean scepticism, Azad (like his creator) refuses to take anything for granted. Like Anand himself in other novels and non-fictional declarations, he chases truth to the bottom of its burrow—a truth involving 'questions of existence, *cogito ergo sum*, scepticism, rationalism, uncaused atoms and the godless universe!—and my longing for depth, so that I might become the most authentic poet-philosopher'.

The novel is a melange of modes and styles combining diaries, letters, straightforward description, and proceeding in direct relationship to Azad's intellectual and emotional evolution towards what he calls in a letter to Irene, a 'pursuit of meaning'. The insatiable thirst for meaning in a meaningless world may not have been assuaged in Azad. Still the book ends with providing him a capacious frame of reference in which to pursue meaning. The

metaphysical longings harassing Azad from the very beginning require an overarching reverberation in which his need for sexual love attains more than a passing individual significance. Azad's conversations in Bloomsbury with the high priests of the the avant-grade reflect the no-holds-barred iconoclasm of the twenties and thirties threatening to knock out all the certitudes of the earlier intellectual style. Azad's direct involvement in the ferment of the times makes him a large-dimensioned character embodying the terrors and mysteries of varying kinds.

#### NEW INTERROGATIONS

But with all this Azad does not cease to draw our sympathy. Indeed, because of his total surrender to the intellectual and emotional tides engulfing him from all sides, he comes out scarred though fully replenished. Anand's narrative—rambling, discursive, doubling back and forth in various modes and styles enables Azad to realise the more-than-life-size potential that his intellectual endowments invest him with. A frenetic energy not before seen in Anand's fiction blasts this novel together, emanating largely from the hero's consuming ambition to understand himself and his world. Stendhal would have seen in this ambition a high degree of nobility, for nobility in his sense consists in the protagonist's capacity to rise above others through the strength of his desire, to make the world a veritable laboratory of social, historical and metaphysical experimentation. Azad shares with Julien Sorel a reckless courage which allows him to live his primordial struggles



consciousness without a trace of irony, with a combination of macho and altruistic impulses. Contradictory as these impulses are, in Azad they form a nexus of motivations urging him to ever new interrogations of reality and the world. The whole novel, then, proceeds in constant combat with its constitutive elements. The combat itself is largely the result of numerous philosophies, doctrines and world-views grappling for acceptance by Azad/Anand and giving to the book the quality of implicated theatre. If one emerges at the end either triumphantly or defeated, the reason is that the organisation of *The Bubble* does not allow the kind of rounded conclusions in which all disharmony goes away and everything ends happily ever after. The moral and intellectual spaciousness of the novel affords enough elbow-room to test the abstractions against gritty bruising naughtiness of Azad's metaphysical experiences of physical love and social non-conformity.

A clear illustration of this is the bouts of jealousy suffered by Azad when he discovers his women with other lovers. Lucy and Irene not only crystallize his desire to translate the latent Krishna from a instinct into a human interplay of spiritual and erotic passion, but also show him up as a real suffering adolescent lover who can't provide a rival. The Madan Mehta episode in the latter section of the book reveals to us a different Azad from the vivacious, argumentative young philosopher who takes all to search for answers to his riddles. Conversely, in the metaphysical amplitude of the novel Azad's amorous life escapes

the cuddling sentimentality of melodrama and becomes credible as genuine experience.

#### COMPELLING FORCE

Here I would like to recall Azad's infatuation with Yasmin in *Confession*. Lacking a scaffolding of ideas as influential as in this book, the Yasmin section in the earlier book does not rise above the maudlin plane, Anand's protestations notwithstanding. In *The Bubble* Azad's love experiences form a mosaic whose dominant pattern is cut out of a bedrock of metaphysical ideas. Consequently it validates those experiences and contributes to the novel's total design.

I have argued that *The Bubble* is a novel of ideas and would risk a claim that in creating Krishna Azad as a complex character driven equally decisively by emotions and ideas, Anand has brought to the Indian-English novel a

sense of spirited adventure for the first time. Ideas in this novel generate an unmediated involvement of the protagonist in every aspect of his search and provide its dominant rhythm. The novel does not stand up for one idea or a world-view. It affords a space in which philosophies, doctrines and world-views clash and lose their hard-edged singularities. By living through his obsessions (like Julien Sorel in different circumstances), Azad and his creator have once again sustained the imaginative truth of human autonomy in all its contradictoriness. More importantly, the deep intellectual and emotional suffering that leaves the protagonist burnt out of all falsity and pretence bespeaks a dignity which gives to *The Bubble* a peculiar compelling force.

M. L. Raina is Professor of English at Punjab University, Chandigarh and Literary Editor of *New Quest*.

## A Bad Bargain

G. R. Madan and Tara Madan

**Village Development in India : A Sociological Approach**

pp. 390, *Allied*, 1983, Rs. 90.00.

Reviewed by Alok Sinha

The verbose authors of this apparently copious volume profess a new approach by claiming to focus attention on the sociological factors of village development, as contrasted to the economic and cultural factors discussed in earlier studies by Dube, Mann, etc.

Now, in an age replete with fundamentalism, the Madans too are appropriately fundamentalist

in their quest as well as their judgments. For them, all is not well with village development in India. And EUREKA! the remedies lie in changes in land reform legislation, adequate farm supplies through cooperatives, planning of irrigation facilities, improvement of communication system, building up of community assets, proper training (what,

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pray, is 'proper' training?) of local leaders (but by whom?), public recognition of those who do community work (whoever, withholds it now?), and reorganisation (by whom?) of religious institutions (what kind?) to remove (on what basis?) caste tensions and social barriers which hinder social mobility and proper (what, pray again, is 'proper' in this context?) social and economic development.

These are fundamental prescriptions, impressive and grandiose, and yet all too familiar—something like the age-old exhortation of truth being golden, et al. But therein lies the problematical rub of fundamentalism that, in a way, it is the same old opiate in new forms for the age-old ills. And being opiate, they jell best but only when mouthed by various 'godmen' who, by virtue of their profession, are licensed to be recklessly, indeed irresponsibly, generous with their exhortations.

But if such easy fundamentalism is also resorted to by sociologists, who by virtue of their academic call ought to be disciplined, their resultant conclusions, if such they can be called, can neither enlighten nor provoke any useful and stimulating discussions. And such, regrettably, is the quality of Madans' present work.

In fact, the Madans came up with the same old answers to the same old questions bedevilling rural development. This is not to belittle 'the same old answers' merely because they have been repeated ad nauseum, if only because basic truths cannot but be repeated over and over again,

but to feel dismayed that sociologists like our reputed authors who are expected to base all their findings and judgments on field studies seem here to have conveniently mouthed the old truths without showing them to have emerged from their own field studies.

Their professedly 'sociological approach' to village development in India is said to be based on their observations carried out in two phases, in 1965-66 and later in 1979-80, in the same set of two villages in Lucknow district. But to begin with, their book is replete with statistics quite obviously collected from government sources which, without any cross-checking, cannot be much relied upon. Indeed, it would not be too much to say that the book reads like a Community Development PR document, since there is hardly any analysis or evaluation to go by.

For example, one of their wise feelings is 'that the real problem is a socio-psychological one, that is, of creating a new type of leadership, to which adequate attention has not been paid. And unless this is created we can neither develop community spirit among the people nor can we attain social justice for the poor on which depends the proper development of the rural community'. This is by no means a statement of sociological fact but a generalised and all too vague sentiment which takes no cognisance whatsoever of any sectional interests which might conflict with each other and thus indeed imperill the prospects of rural development. Also, it sounds like a popu-

list election speech:

Again, the statement

'There is also need for a change in the outlook of leaders at block and higher levels. While the non-officials were asked to identify the major problems in their block, majority of them stated that they had sufficient land or inadequate irrigation facilities. What they wanted was that government should give them more land to cultivate and should supply electricity for the installation of power wells. They never had in their mind the problems of the poor sections or the scheduled castes who were ill-treated, had no land, and whose earnings were low. On the contrary, they proposed the programmes for the benefit of the poorer sections e.g., poultry farming, pig-rearing, fisheries, etc. Thus a lot of change in their attitudes and perhaps a thorough training in the philosophy of the Community Development Program was desirable.'

can perhaps be accepted as mouthpiece the right sentiment but the manner of doing it without any amplification whatsoever is much too synthetic to qualify for anything even remotely similar to a 'sociological approach'. It leaves one to wonder how to leave alone even begin to grapple with the many complexities of social relationships.

Further, one of their dictums is that 'Block administration needs to be reorganised to ensure that there is proper supervision over the Village Level Workers (now called the Village Level Officer), that those who neglect their duties are weeded out,



that some official is made responsible for the completion of community works once started'. Now this is absolutely bland, giving no clue as to how this great reform is to be effected, and mainly because the authors have not attempted to find out why a situation has obtained (according to them) which calls for such reforms. Therefore it is not even the 'colourless' public administration approach, being more like a routine note prepared by a disinterested or ignorant BABU.

Our perennial problem with specialist academicians is that some of them tend to be like frogs-in-the-well, with their eyes firmly though not necessarily competently fixed on the walls AROUND them, but NOT BEYOND. In a similar fashion, Mahans' 'sociological' approach does not look into the politics of the

villages and their interactions with the development process. What is the state and level of village politics? Will mere administrative tinkering affect in any way? And how about the social milieu? Uttar Pradesh is a vast conglomerate of variables, where Lucknow District is different from both the Western and Eastern parts of the province. Can there be any uniform set of advice in such a situation?

All things considered, at Rs. 90 this book is a bad bargain. It will not teach anything new to either the sociologist or the administrator, and is therefore simply not worth it.

*Alok Sinha, a member of the I.A.S. is Deputy Director of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie.*

## A Minor Talent

Romen Basu

*Rustling of Many Winds*

pp. 204, Sterling, 1982, Rs. 60.00.

Reviewed by Ayappa Paniker

The blurb tells us the essential facts: Romen Basu is a senior official of the United Nations; he has worked for the World Organization for thirty-four years and travelled in 110 countries; *Rustling of Many Winds* is his second collection of short stories. The format of the short story helps Basu to move from one locale to another in his attempt to cast his net as wide as possible and listen to the rustling of many winds. This anthology of 25 short stories is indeed a veritable "UN" collec-

tion. Its author is a "global" writer in that sense.

Nevertheless, in almost every short story, an Indian, especially Bengali, sensibility seems to operate. One of the recurring themes in the stories is the merging of many sensibilities. The American confusion between Iranian and Indian identities is raised in the opening short story "Gunsmoke in Phoenixia". This kind of a natural UN perspective has endowed the author with a sense of humour which enlivens most of the

stories. Human contacts across cultures are a major concern in Basu's short fiction: this is but natural in a UN official gifted with a creative vision. Several of the situations portrayed in the stories are typical of international encounters. Basu's good humour and compassion are basic virtues required of an imaginative U.N. official; and these are the very qualities that make his narrative art also come off very well.

### A NON-INDIAN SITUATION

An Indian in a non-Indian situation, with all the grotesquerie and fun that might result from that; this is the central point of several of the stories. "Gunsmoke in Phoenixia" narrates the misadventure of going out for hunting a buck for Thanks-giving. "Scheffeera" recounts the slow transformation of Prakash under the influence of his wife Sonali who is a great lover of plants. "United Parcel Service" presents the theme of generation gap and the deterioration of family ties owing to the spread of an urban-industrial culture detrimental to human values. Although, the characters are Americans, the perspective seems to be that of an Indian, worried about the erosion of values such as the natural affection between mother and daughter. It carries the underline of a lament on the triumph of mechanization over human affections. "A Glass of Water" presents the sad spectacle of two old women, feeling choked under the new set up. It dramatises the plight of aging in an urban society. "How do you measure?" is yet another portrayal of the decline of traditional family ties in a



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society fast going permissive.

There are also stories which relate episodes from Indian life often seen from the perspective of a person who has been outside. But these are not concerned with the usual East-West encounter that is so ubiquitous in Indo-English fiction. "Touch Me" is a good example of what happens in an Indian village, but the presence of the outsider is very much to the point. The mother in this story is an idealised image of maternal affection. Even the American boy gets transformed under the influence. When the Indian boy recalls his experience, the American boy contrasts it with his own childhood. The former says: "She kept me warm under her own quilt," and the latter confesses: "When I was five years old, some times I had trouble reaching my bed from the door, plowing through a mountain of toys. I remember that very well, but I don't remember if I ever slept under the same blanket with my mother." The Indian boy quips: "Is that enough reason to take comfort in drugs?" This might appear a simplistic generalization of the whole psycho-drama of drug addiction. But it illustrates Romen Basu's view that the West is going the wrong way. "Runner" is another story lighted up by nostalgia contrasting the careers of two classmates—one going up the ladder and the other staying more or less at the same level of life.

Some of the stories have an exotic locale. Basu shows great skill in realising the strange atmosphere of Rome or some Latin-American capital. "A Professional Friend" is a good example of Basu's skill as a story teller. Ma-

toes had picked up Miranda and carefully planned all his strategies. He learned how to kiss her and get a return kiss. She acted her part very well. There was no objection when he touched her breasts. She was waiting for the inevitable next move. But when he tried to unbutton her skirt in peaceful anticipation she coolly told him: "I like you very much. I have enjoyed doing things with you, but for this you

must pay me." She explained: I am a professional. You would want a doctor friend of yours to treat you free, would you?" This O. Henry twist at the end is a curring feature of the comic stories of Basu. "Once upon a Gouth met" is a brilliant instance of the sense of the comic.

Ayappa Panikar is Professor of English at the University of Kerala, Trivandrum.

## Some Imaginative Vigour

D. V. K. Raghavacharyulu

*The Song of the Red Rose and other Poems*

pp. 97, Saradhi Publications, Guntur, 1983, Rs. 20.00.

Reviewed by K. Venkatachari

One striking fact about the Indo-Anglian poetic scene is its being inundated with volumes of poetry. This has the effect of drowning works of significance. But with determination and perseverance one can salvage collections of poems like the present one which, though prone to the 'cultural trance' of cliché thinking, present rich mosaics of experience.

*The Song of the Red Rose and other Poems* is a collection of sixty seven poems which are simpler and more accessible than what the author's intimidating prefatory note would suggest. Several of these poems seem occasional and can be said to "range from the first world of Ugadi to the last world of a Major Man's Punya-Tithi" (as the author avers) only through a determined critical ingenuity. However, these poems for the most part manifest

a remarkable 'sense of texture' though heavily dowsed with a demicism, as in the following lines:

While in Philadelphia  
Half a world passed by,  
Touching, but untouched  
In ceremonies of innocence  
But dimly apprehended the  
In a passage of experience  
Lost in an aluminium blur  
Of transatlantic flash.

(Italics mine)

Or

There is still a glow of coy  
And a glimmer of the sky

In her wonder-wide pair

Though prickling with bore

Shaming patronising voyeur

With five ringed fat finger

Empty, sophisticate and

Withholding in a fiat of



civility  
The tribute due of alms  
However niggardly.  
—"Another View of the  
Mendicants,"  
The first passage seeks to evoke  
the spirit of a place captured  
through sensory impressions  
while the second is content to  
present specific images of a beg-  
gar woman leading to a mytho-  
poetic interpretation in the lines  
that follow:

Annapurna lost  
In a wilderness of Noes  
Wandering listless though  
upright  
Through the preambling alleys  
Of her own Eternal City,—  
—"Another View of the  
Mendicants,"

But some of the poems or parts  
of poems read as shopping-lists  
with all the attendant tediousness.  
Consider the following :

Only sleep is here  
To greet the awakening  
The rock, the river and the  
cloud,  
The eye, the sky and the air  
And all the revenants fly  
In cloud-puffs  
Of eider-down and musk  
And camphor and myrrh.  
—"The Stare"

Dr  
Sand-dunes soaked in reverie  
Land-falls and Wind-flowers,  
Cactus and cashew  
Oleander and casuarina  
Murmuring intonations  
Of light and wind,  
In mountain intervals  
And moon-down clefts  
—"It Came To Me,"  
gain, for portraits to become  
poetic and evocative the totality  
of the subject's personality should  
emerge not from an enumeration

of his 'achievements' but from a  
revelation of the 'psychic ener-  
gies' that have made them possi-  
ble. Moreover, what seems inge-  
nious and even revelatory in  
prose may appear inert in verse  
unless quickened into life by ap-  
propriate emotion. Consider the  
poem, "Pythagoras" (p.83):

He stood upright on the hypo-  
tenuse

He slept always diagonally  
On an octagonal bed  
In triangular pantaloons,  
Walking in circles  
And floating on spheres

Though this passage does not  
leave out any geometric shape or  
figure it does not spell any pat-  
tern of thought or emotion to be  
considered poetic.

The title poem—the longest in  
this collection—is obviously in-  
tended to be eulogistic of Jawahar-  
lal Nehru, the man and the myth,

with its emphasis on the latter,  
which does not come alive be-  
cause the "narrative" seems edi-  
ted rather than shaped. A lyrical  
vision, the poem despite its un-  
due reliance on "'heroic' ad-  
jectives" and stock phrases ("to  
wear the sack-cloth," "charter of  
freedom", "solid mandala," "chro-  
nicked past," "here and now,")  
does present a memorable poetic  
memento the texture of which,  
however, remains opaque because  
of its being formed of what is  
formulaic rather than epiphanic.  
This book nevertheless evidences  
an imaginative vigour and a  
sense of 'the autonomy of the  
aesthetic' which are rarely en-  
countered in much of Indo-Ang-  
lian poetry.

*K. Venkatachari, is Professor  
of English at Osmania University,  
Hyderabad.*

## Social Change & Cultural Inertia

Rita Khanna

*Agricultural Mechanisation and Social Change in India*

pp. XVII+201, Uppal Publishing House, 1983, Rs. 125.00.

**Reviewed by Balgovind Baboo**

The book under review is a  
modest attempt to understand the  
processes of social change conse-  
quent upon agricultural mechan-  
isation in the ravine infested Mo-  
rena district of M.P. The book  
consists of seven chapters: four  
of which range from 4 to 10 pages  
whereas the chapter on "Findings  
of the Study" consists of 117  
pages. The first chapter "Aspects  
of Social Change" is an attempt  
at conceptualizing social change  
especially with reference to agri-

cultural mechanisation. The au-  
thor takes into account the 'sta-  
tics' and 'dynamics' aspects of  
change emphasised by Comte's and  
Sorokin's emphasis on cultural  
change, the dialectics of forces and  
relations of production in the  
Marxian 'economic theory of  
change', ideational and technolo-  
gical changes, etc. But she has  
applied very little of any of the  
approaches or a synthesis of these  
approaches in her study.

Regarding the rationale for the



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selection of the area of study, she says that the sudden prosperity of the under-developed Morena district after 1974 was the most important point. She chose to study the impact of agricultural mechanisation on rural population because the phenomenon was very conspicuous and also because she wanted to see the outcome of interaction between tradition and modernity. In the second chapter of the book, she has provided the physical and social environment of the area. In Chapter three she has discussed the evolution of the various rural development programmes and their role in the area of study. Reviewing four village monographs she considers it relevant to study the consequences of economic development, the factors facilitating and obstructing change, reasons for people's apathy or willingness to change and the role of cultural factors in change.

#### FOUR OBJECTIVES

She undertook the study with four major objectives: 1. To learn about the commonly used mechanised implements in agriculture; 2. To analyse the extent of change in attitudes and outlook of the villagers with regard to traditions; 3. To test if the contention "status of family increase with possession of machines" is valid; and 4. To create a baseline for further studies. (p. 53).

The study covers five villages of five tehsils of district Morena under the Chambal Command Area. Data were collected both from primary and secondary sources with the help of an interview schedule and also through non-

participant observation. Assuming that the head of the households are involved in decision making she has interviewed 100 of them on a random basis. Observing the low response on sensitive topics like dowry and untouchability she suspects the reliability of the informations. She also suspects under-reporting of facts and figures by people who expected economic aid.

She has worked out about 100 tables to compress the data regarding the respondents' bio-data, their knowledge about the use and handling of agricultural machines and the economic, social and political effects of mechanisation of agriculture. After providing the social background of respondents she has about 60 Tables dealing with the social effects of agricultural mechanisation. She thinks that social background of the respondents such as caste, religion, structure and size of family, educational status of the head of the household, occupation and income, etc., are significant in affecting social phenomena like giving and receiving of dowry, education of the family and especially of women, social evils like purdah system and untouchability, status and insecurity of the family, etc. Cross-tabulating the social phenomena with the background variables and four types of responses—increased, decreased, unaffected and unconcerned—she has derived her conclusions. As regards political effects she has cross-tabulated the four types of responses with the background variables. Here, in case of 'increase in political effects' she further probes whether the increase is in terms of contact time for

political activities or money for political purposes.

#### CONCLUSIONS

She concludes that most of the respondents came from Thakur caste living in joint family and had moderate educational achievement. 97% of them were landowners having less than 5 hectares and about 50% had annual income of more than Rs. 10,000. The respondents owned 128 machines in total consisting of electric pump, tractor, thresher, diesel pump, kutti, flour mill and mill. The machines are owned for familial purpose and sometimes hired out and 26% of them said that the yield had increased. Due to subdivisions of holdings the tractor did not prove economically feasible but it is bought as a status symbol. She maintains that giving of dowry, education of family and freedom of women on the increase but education of females, the purdah system and untouchability are still at traditional level. However, size of family has increased directly in proportion to economic betterment and acquisition of agricultural machines. That is, economic changes have not necessarily led to social changes.

Rita Khanna's book would be quite useful as reference material for agrarian studies in M.P. However, it must be noted that she has emphasised too much on rural inertia without looking into their explanations which lie in the very structure of the society. There is paucity of information regarding agricultural practices in Morena district before the introduction of canal irrigation for agricultural mechanisation.



the title of the book one expected that she would have answered questions like: Consequent upon agricultural mechanisation who are the beneficiaries of the programmes, what are the types and processes of changes vis-a-vis the various strata of agrarian population, how do traditional societies adjust their life styles in the new set up, whether people are sympathetic/apathetic to bureaucratic changes in the developmental processes, etc. Although there are some useful tables, graphs and

diagrams some of the simple tables could have been simply described. The selection of respondents even with "random" procedure shows an upper caste bias in the sense that out of the 100 respondents 57 were Thakur, 21 Brahmin, 9 Baniya, 7 Scheduled Caste, 5 others and just 1 Scheduled Tribe! The manuscript needed better editing.

*Balgovind Baboo lecturer in Sociology at M. D. University, Rohtak.*

## A Welcome Initiative

**C. C. Datt, T. Pandey, K.V. Joshi, and S. B. Srivastava, Editors.**

**Sources of India's Strength: Foundation Course-I**

p. XII+344, Vani Educational Books (a division of Vikas), 1984, Rs. 40.00.

**Reviewed by Ram Singh**

The University Grants Commission's concern for bringing about reform in higher education by restructuring courses for under graduate studies "so that they become not only meaningful and useful to the society but also be the means of change and development" inspired the faculty and the principal of Rani Durgavati Vishwavidyalaya, Jabalpur, to undertake the preparation of a course of study in two volumes. The present (first) volume deals with social, cultural, economic, literary, philosophical, religious, and political aspects of Indian society in "unified whole," right from the pre-vedic period to present-day India. The two volumes were planned to serve as textbooks for the newly introduced "Foundation Course I" for gra-

duate studies of Jabalpur University. Besides being a part of the academic curriculum, this course is also expected to make students aware of their "glorious cultural heritage" and the progress the country has made in terms of evolving democratic political structures and in achieving industrial revolution. It is hoped that the book "will inspire our students to discover their country for themselves" and that "they will enter the practical world with new vision of their surroundings."

The book is a collection of articles of varying length and quality, written by several faculty members, each dealing with the field of his or her respective discipline of study. Each chapter is followed by a few questions for exercise.

## WELL WRITTEN

Some of the articles are well written, offering as little of the author's value judgement as possible and supporting their point of view with a considerable amount of documentation. For example, Part III, entitled "Polity", describes the foundation of modern India in terms of the Indian renaissance of the nineteenth century, influenced by the intellectual and liberal thinking of the West, which filtered through the English language and teaching of science. The rise of social reformers such as Raja Mohan Roy, Vivekananda, Lokmanya Tilak, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh, and Gandhiji came about through their commitment to freedom, equality, and unity.

The chapter, "March to Freedom", describes the birth of the Indian National Congress and its transformation from a liberal, intellectual debating club into a powerful political movement in the hands of leaders such as Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, and finally, Motilal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi. This movement led to the independence of India. The chapter entitled "Indian Constitution", written by T. G. Dugvekar, provides a fine example of the democratic evolution in the country. It is followed by a chapter on contemporary thought as it developed during the past three decades. Part III concludes with the message of peace through the achievement of science and technology as the best expressed as-



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piration of the people of India, as well as of the whole world.

Part V deals with the Indian economy, starting with the textile and handicraft industries which India had developed over the centuries and for which she received due recognition from the rest of the world, especially in the West. The self-sufficiency of the Indian villages kept the economy stable, as the means of transportation had not developed to the degree that goods produced in one area could be easily marketed in another area. This section goes into details of the objectives of economic planning and an evaluation of its achievements, in terms of both the development of human resources and the problems of technology and social change. The author evaluates the total investment and the growth of the economy in relation to its objectives.

### THREE PROBLEMS

Considering the poor state of the economy which India had reached during the British period due to the outflow of the country's natural resources, the growth has been satisfactory. Today, India is one of the few developing countries that has realized the seriousness of the population increase and has introduced family planning to curb this growth. However, in terms of the original objectives, the planned economy has not succeeded. It has not been able to make full use of the available manpower and equitably distribute the industrial benefits; nor has it been able to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. Mahatma Gandhi favoured low-

level cottage industry which would not have exploited the natural resources to such a large degree.

India's three major problems are the fast-increasing population, unemployment, and poverty. In order to solve these problems, India needs both approaches to the economy — capital-intensive to keep the gap narrow between the developed and the developing countries; and labour-intensive techniques to provide employment to the unemployed.

### SOMEWHAT SUPERFICIAL

In Part II of this book, the authors deal with philosophy, religion, art, and literature. Chapter 8 provides an excellent overview of architecture and iconography beginning from pre-historic times and continuing up to modern times. The temples and stupas of the South, the Ashokan pillars all over the country, the cave art of Udaigiri and Khandgiri, the Buddhist caves, the Khajuraho temples of the reign of the Chandela kings, the Moghal architecture, especially of Shahjahan's period, and the Ajanta caves done in Rempura style—all must inspire the student with the richness and depth of Indian art down through the ages—both religious and secular.

Indian literature and poetry have their own place in world literature, especially due to the writings of ancient authors such as Valmiki, Tulsidas, and Kalidas.

The chapters on Indian philosophy and religion are mixed in their clarity. The introduction to the Vedas and the Upanishads is

fair, and so are the systems philosophy and their classification. But the description of other religious faiths, especially the ones that originated outside of India, lack comprehension and descriptive depth. The teachings of Christianity and Islam are dismissed in a few sentences without touching the heart of these religious faiths. The same is true of Zoroastrianism, and to a certain degree of Sikhism. In the Christian description, even the sequence of events is incorrect. Christianity has been in India for more than 1,800 years and Islam for at least 1300 years, but in the cultural nuances and ethos, their contributions are not recognized.

### NO EMPIRICAL BASIS

Parts I and IV deal with Indian culture and tradition and society in terms of contemporary thought. In Part I, the author provides a definition of culture and gives an outline of Indian culture and society. He gives details of theoretical characteristics of the Indian culture: the stages of Indian life; classification of sacraments and obligations and the educational system. All of this applied only to a small people—not to the whole society. The author makes no effort to substantiate his claims, but bases them on subjective judgment, which has no empirical basis. For example: "The Indian society was thus originally divided into classes—Aryans and non-Aryans. This division of the society into two classes was not scientific. It came to an end in the succeeding period and a new system



to being mainly based on *Karma* (p. 11). He also states that, during the Vedic period, women, though not considered intellectually equal with men, used to attain higher education (p. 16) and that in the medieval period "women were, however, allowed full opportunities in the field of education" (p. 19). All women?

These sections abound in unsupported generalizations and non-sequiturs. A few examples: "The recognition of various types of marriages and the concept of various types of sons are glaring examples of the liberal thinking of Indians" (p. 17); "They also started celebrating the festivals of one another and accepting religious beliefs of each other" (p. 19); and in the economic section— "Wealth used to be earned by ethical and not by unethical means. Besides, the accumulation of wealth was done for the welfare of the society and not for acquiring personal luxuries and comforts" (p. 23); "The ancient Indian economic life pattern was simple and, therefore, the people had not enough time to solve the other serious problems of life" (p. 26); "The economic life of the ancient Indians was highly restrained and well organized...the economic system of the country was very strong and the people led a life of happiness and contentment" (p. 26); "There were different *gurukuls* for boys and girls" (p. 26). For girls? Where?

#### VAGUE GENERALISATION

In Part IV, which considers Indian social organization and marriage and family, the first

chapter is devoted to tribal social organizations and institutions, especially dealing with the general family pattern, lineage, clan, marriage, and youth homes. The caste system is reduced to *varna* or class system; and the salient features of Hindu social organizations are confused with religious beliefs and described as the Indian social system, which is stated to be most "beautiful and successful coordination of materialism and spiritualism" in the world (p. 231).

Further statements which have no empirical support are: "Only religion determines the social structure and features of individual behaviour" (p. 234); "Today the institutional form of rural religion is evident in lower and scheduled castes also" (p. 236); "The caste discrimination is gradually disappearing" (p. 239); "The caste born high-low theory is being replaced [by] an increasing sense of classlessness" (p. 239); "Villagers are becoming shrewd, clever and selfish. Democracy assists in promoting this tendency" (p. 240). "A new culture of homogeneity [sic] in all religions is taking place" (p. 240).

The author also states that urban family life is unstable and that "the importance of family in a man's life has decreased" (p. 240), that "marital compulsions are taken lightly" (p. 242), and that "due to their education and occupation, the importance of fidelity of wife towards her husband is also on the decline" (p. 243).

The book is replete with English language errors as well as

typographical errors. At times words are missing or misplaced; or an entirely inappropriate word appears by mistake, obscuring the meaning of the sentence. The misuse or omission of the definite or indefinite article has made some sentences nearly incomprehensible. There are chapters in which the English is so loaded with serious errors that the reader must make a concerted effort to grasp the intended meanings. Considering this problem, as well as the intention of the authors to impress upon the students the importance of appreciating Indian culture, why not bring out these volumes in Hindi?

It was a good idea for a University faculty to try to prepare such a comprehensive work. Those articles which have empirical backing will be helpful to students. But those which are based on subjective judgement should be changed and, if judgements have to be given, they should be supported by proper documentation. There is no need to use hyperbole in describing a culture. If Parts I and IV are supported by objective data, this book will become a good comprehensive textbook. In the world community, Indian culture and philosophy and the Hindu religion occupy a place of pride; and so do other cultures, religions, and civilizations. In order for this to be a scholarly and credible textbook, it must have its basis in research.

Ram Singh is Director of the Institute for Development Education, Madras.



May 1, 1984

# World Development Report 1983

## World Development Report 1983

pp. X + 214 (including 70 pages of maps and tables) Published for the World Bank by *Oxford University Press*, 1983, Rs. 30.00

Reviewed by Dhires Bhattacharyya

This is the sixth in the series of annual World Development Reports issued by the World Bank (I.B.R.D.). As in previous issues, this year's Report also engages in a searching review of the international economic situation as it unfolded itself during the period 1980-82. The most important feature of the period was, of course, the sluggishness of the world economy as a whole, which was reflected in the slowing down of the G.D.P. growth rate in both developed and developing countries. In the developed industrial countries this growth rate declined from 3.2 per cent in 1979 to minus 0.2 per cent in 1982, according to World Bank estimates. In the developing countries taken as a group, the C.D.P. growth rate dwindled from 5 per cent in 1980 to 2 per cent in 1982. The volume of world trade also shrank as production declined. The annual growth rate in trade volume fell from 6.5 per cent in 1979 to minus 2 per cent in 1982, after a year of total stagnation in 1981.

### LONG-TERM GOALS

The purpose of the World Development Reports has been not only one of analysing the contemporary economic situation in terms of figures and facts, but also to focus attention on some basic problems of economic decision-making related to long-term

goals of development. The Report for 1982 was designed to bring out the importance of agricultural development for general economic progress and to consider the nature of various programmes launched by governments in different countries for the amelioration of the conditions of the rural poor. The central theme of the 1983 Report, to be found in Part II of the Report, is the multifaceted problem of economic management in general.

The Report draws attention to the important point that planning and management are not one and the same thing. Planning is concerned with the preparation of a blue-print for development, which is only a first step in the execution of programmes for development. The vital issue of improving efficiency in execution quite often tends to be neglected after a plan for development has been drawn up. The Report contains sound suggestions for the raising of standards of efficiency in the execution of development programmes, whether such programmes are entrusted to State-owned enterprises (SOE's) or to privately owned concerns. "The key factor determining the efficiency of an enterprise" says the Report (p. 50), "is not whether it is publicly or privately owned, but how it is managed".

This stress on efficiency in management is itself prompted by

the fact that all over the world the growth rate of output associated with a certain volume of investment appears to be on a decline. The Report quantifies the decline in efficiency by pointing out that between the 1960's and 1970's the ratio of increase in output to investment has fallen by nearly 25 per cent. (p. 11). Though the whole of this decline need not be attributed to poor or ill-motivated management, the Report perhaps reflects a general feeling by stressing that a large part of it is due to negligence of efficiency norms. The Report will be rendering a great service to people all over the world if its admonitions in this respect are heeded with proper care by the agencies entrusted with development administration in all developing countries.

### EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES

In the coming years the developing countries are less and less likely to be bailed out by the developed countries who will remain concerned with their own domestic recovery. The developing countries must, therefore, learn to make the best use of their resources. They must prune the unproductive activities and concentrate primarily on those aspects of economic management which are likely to yield good results in terms of productivity and productivity. They must, for example, stop the proliferation of SOE's with little prospects of becoming an aid to, rather than a barrier to, development. They must permit prices to reflect real opportunity costs and



sources to be guided to their destinations by appropriate price indicators and not by semi-arbitrary, politically motivated decisions. While all such instructions will appear to some people as respecting the World Bank's traditional predilections for a market economy and its bland unconcern for vital distributional issues, one cannot lightly dismiss them as sound or irrelevant. The Hippocratic oath of the economic profession being what it is, the concern for making resources go as far as possible, in the interests of removing poverty as fast as possible, will perhaps be shared by all of them irrespective of ideological leanings.

#### DECENTRALIZATION

The Report is interspersed with interesting case studies highlighting measures being adopted in different countries of the world to improve efficiency in the management of development programmes. Such measures include : reduction of the load of work for state organs so that they can more usefully concentrate on macro-economic policy issues, reduction in the number and variety of SOE's either by transferring them to private control or by better co-ordination of their work, substitution of the system of management contracts with private concerns in order to replace slipshod SOE management practices with something more effective and vibrant, and other similar measures. It is interesting to learn from the Report (p. 51) that in Belgrade, the capital of a socialist country (Yugoslavia), street clean-

ing has been contracted out to a private company, while in another socialist country, Hungary, a provision has been enacted in 1982 to allow formation of private companies employing up to 150 people. The important economic reforms introduced by China since 1979 also point towards the need for de-centralisation in economic decision-making and the restoration of material incentives for producers and savers.

Turning round to the non-socialist world, the Report cites the interesting case of Brazil where a Ministry of Debureaucratization (sic) was created in 1979 to simplify

the bureaucratic processes involved in trying to establish new business ventures. Several other countries have also taken steps to reduce delays in issuing industrial licences or in making tax refunds to exporters. While the involvement of the State in economic policy-making can no longer be denigrated, it remains essential to ensure, both in mixed and state-dominated economies, that policy measures initiated by the State do not add to costs of resource use by encouraging procrastination, or—worse—by generating corruption. The Report addresses itself to these administrative issues as

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well, in its search for recipes for reversing the trend towards decline in economic performance.

### PRICE DISTORTION

A novel feature of the Report is its attempt to construct an index for price distortion in different economies and to establish a relation between the degree of price distortion in the economy and its rate of growth. Technical refinements apart, this is obviously a venture into an issue of great significance, both theoretical and practical. Unfortunately the Report has not adequately disclosed its procedures for the construction of the distortion index. It is heartening, however, to find that on the basis of the index constructed, India scores better than a large number of other developing countries, the value of the index being 1.86 in the case of India, while the highest value encountered (for Ghana) is 2.86. Thus India is a relatively 'open' economy in the sense that her domestic price structure is not too far out of line with international relative prices. But India does not appear to have benefited much from her attempt to keep in step with the outside world; her rates of growth, in both production and exports, do not support the contention that the less prices are distorted, the better for economic growth. Other factors too are obviously involved and the Report has not minced matters in dealing with those other depressant factors.

To say that the Report, issued with the authority of the World Bank, is informative and compre-

hensive, will be to say the same thing twice over. What is most gratifying is that World Bank economists are getting deeply concerned about the root causes of low development, unmitigated poverty and periodic wide-spread depressions engulfing almost all countries of the world. To understand the world as an economic entity, to delve into the linkages that bind together the different countries, irrespective of their political colours and standards of living, one can turn to no other source better than this. As the

*Guardian* review of the previous year's Report put it, this Report also "is going to be the essential almanac for monitoring the way we are going and where we are going". Its suggestions for policy

reforms are certain to retain their freshness for a much longer period than the very short period within which the Report itself formulates.

*Dhires Bhattacharyya was recently Professor of Economics at the University of Calcutta.*

## A Joy to Read

Janet Rizvi

*Ladakh, Crossroads of High Asia*  
pp. 224. OUP, 1983, Rs. 140.00.

Reviewed by John Lall

Before the aeroplane and the passenger bus made Ladakh accessible to anyone with the inclination to make the trip, it was a good fortnight's trek from Srinagar. As a district officer in 1945 I had a bare month's leave. Although in those days one could enjoy one's wanderings in Kashmir with complete peace of mind unlike our successors who cannot remove the seats of their trousers from the chairs of office for fear of finding them otherwise occupied after five minutes' absence, the nearest I could get to Leh was a stage beyond the Zoji La pass. My friend Wazir Ali and I crossed a pilgrim from western Tibet, padding soft-footed down in his bare feet, a picture of Gu-

ru Nanak dangling like a tail from his neck. His first objective was the sacred lake of Patalwarsar.

At Michahoi we were overtaken by a Kashgar trader, pushing his horse as hard as it could go. I had to catch up with a caravan at Leh before it left for northern Asia. Apart from avoiding stoppages, the journey would account for a month's time. Selling his wares in Srinagar, making deals, drinking with his friends in the Baramulla Yarkand sarai, haggling or being cheated, and he would be away for the best part of four months. This is what life was like at the crossroads of high Asia. Janet Rizvi's apt sub-title



res up the essential character of a life that had remained unchanged since long before Marco Polo trod the silk route to China. All that has gone with the ordering of boundaries and the promise of tolerance.

#### UNCHANGING FLAVOUR

But the flavours remain, in the air at Leh, in the joyous spirit of unchanging values of a people who had been nourished for centuries on the tenuous air of this last outpost of Kashmir and the first stage to Kashgar, the Gobi desert and beyond. What is changing it, and very much for the worse, is not the mild and in a way benevolent military presence, but the ten thousand tourists who pour in every year to corrupt the monks for artefacts and hook the local youth with their insidious poison of drugs and disco culture. They have opened the floodgates for a deluge. We could have followed the example of Bhutan and been more discriminating. In our mistaken view of things, Ladakh is needed money, a so-called economic boost, rather than the integrity of their self-sustaining system. There were other ways of putting Ladakh on the way to progress. As always when there is a boom, the money goes into a few pockets and many of them the wrong ones.

But I am anticipating. It was a happy chance that took the author to Ladakh in the late seventies as the academically trained wife of the top government official. She made the fullest use of opportunities, getting to know ways of life, for there are

several distinct cultural pockets and studying the sources of Ladakhi history. The result is the only authoritative account of the development of Ladakh upto present times. Without the least suggestion of pedantry, the reader will find a reference to the Tarikh-i-Rashidi of Mirza Haider Daughlat, cousin of our own Mughal emperor Babur. The Mongols of Uzbekistan split into two branches on dynastic lines—the Mongols who took over Kashgar and the Turkmen-ised branch of Samarkand. But for that sensible arrangement we might have heard more of Mirza Haider, who credited Babur with being the finest Turkish poet of his age. By then, Buddhism had already flourished in Ladakh for a thousand years. Great kings had come and conquered and gone the way of all those who wield power. Even the sword arm of Islam faltered on the heights above Kargil. Chanzrezi, the Compassionate One, alone remained.

#### DOGRA CONQUEST

Cut off from the south and west, Ladakh survived through the centuries as an independent kingdom, under one dynasty after the other, until the Lahore Darbar decided it was time to confront the Tibetans who had been harassing the Namgyal rulers of Ladakh and disturbing established patterns of trade. The most valued item of this trade was 'pashm' of the Tibetan antelope or *chiru* which the skilful weavers of Srinagar had been fashioning into priceless *toosh* and *shahtoosh* shawls ever since Akbar carried his standards

into the valley in 1586. A Dogra army set off from Kishtwar through Zaskar directly to the Tibetan strongholds in western Tibet. Taking advantage of the favourable season, the seasoned Dogras were more than a match for the Tibetan rabble. But in a subsequent campaign, Zorawar Singh was driven back by 'general' winter and killed by an avalanche. The resulting treaty of Leh, concluded on 17 September, 1842, was a realistic arrangement.

The Dogras of Jammu were recognised as the legitimate rulers of Ladakh; they abandoned their claims to western Tibet, and the border was ratified 'as fixed from ancient times'. The treaty of Leh substantially confirmed the boundary provisions of the treaty of Tingmosgang of 1684 between the Tibetans and Deldan, the Namgyal ruler of Ladakh. Guge, in western Tibet, which had been a province of the Ladakhi kingdom, was lost forever. Sadly, the young king, Jigme Namgyal, was reduced to the status of the jagirdar of Stok. The main objective of the 'pashmina war' had been to ensure the continued flow of this commodity. For some years the Dogras of Jammu had tried to divert it to their territory, but with the 'purchase' of Kashmir by Gulab Singh from the British after the last Sikh war in 1846, the weavers of Srinagar were back in business. The treaty of Leh was ratified by the Sikh governor of Kashmir and the Chinese *amban* at Lhasa, in the name of the Chinese emperor. That is how things continued for another hundred and twenty years, until, almost to the day, the Chinese seized Indian



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territory south and west of a road they had taken from western Tibet though Aksaichin to Injiang. A discussion of events that concern the sovereign countries of India and the People's Republic of China is outside the scope of this book. But the author has dealt with their effect on Ladakh, her proper subject and these have been far-reaching.

## DEVASTATING

The immediate economic impact was devastating. Traditional imports from Tibet—wool, borax and salt—and customary grazing were stopped. Cloth and other articles which Ladakhi traders vended in Tibetan markets to finance their imports were no longer allowed. It has taken time to re-orient the economy. That this has been possible is due as much to the cheerful resourcefulness of these border people as assistance from the government.

Perhaps more fundamental in the long run is the change brought about by the snapping of cultural links with Tibet. Ladakh was virtually a cultural colony of Tibet. Its religion was and will remain Mahayana Buddhism as it developed in Tibet since Indian Buddhist monks took it there in the seventh century. (There is a suggestion that in fact Buddhism travelled to Tibet via Ladakh, even earlier). The great monastic houses of Tibet are parent bodies of Ladakh's gompas. Monks received their training in Tibetan monasteries and returned there from time to time for inspiration from the high lamas, the incarnates and rimpoches, whose influence in the

Buddhist areas on the Indian side of the border has always been of fundamental importance to the popular faith of the people. The centre of their faith now is Dharamsala where His Holiness the Dalai Lama has established himself. Numerous high lamas, geches and renowned teachers joined the exodus from Tibet after the suppression of the popular uprising of 1959. The people of Ladakh have no need to look elsewhere for inspiration.

Janet Rizvi has thoughtfully included a description of the principal gompas, an appendix giving information for visitors and a handy index. There is also an interesting appendix about Jesuits in western Tibet. A glossary of common terms and a select biblio-

graphy complete a volume which is very chastely produced by publishers. The inclusion as papers of an area map is an inimitable coup. For far too a publication of even the simplest maps was not permitted, though it is known that maps of the border areas are available everywhere else in the world, by courtesy of the satellite mapping department of the United States. That the government lentled at all is to be warmly commended, though I understand publishers' effort were rewarded after two long years.

The book, I should add, is a joy to read.

*John Lall, formerly of the* has written extensively on Ladakh and several related subjects.

## Books Received

(A brief notice here does not preclude a detailed review later on).

Roy Brajdeb Prasad. *The Later Vedic Economy*. Janaki Prakashan, 1984, 448p. Rs. 220.00.

A pioneering work which makes use of both literary data and archaeological findings.

Nair Kusum. *Transforming Traditionally: Land and Labour use in Agriculture in Asia and Africa*. Allied 1983, xii+168 p. Rs. 75.00.

A major new study of rural development in India, China and Africa. The author underlines

the importance of integrating factor endowments, natural and other resources with customary cultural practices, work patterns and institutions governing the use of land and labour.

Mehta R. R. S. *Autobiography of a Cheque*. Sterling 1984, x+168p. Rs. 50.00.

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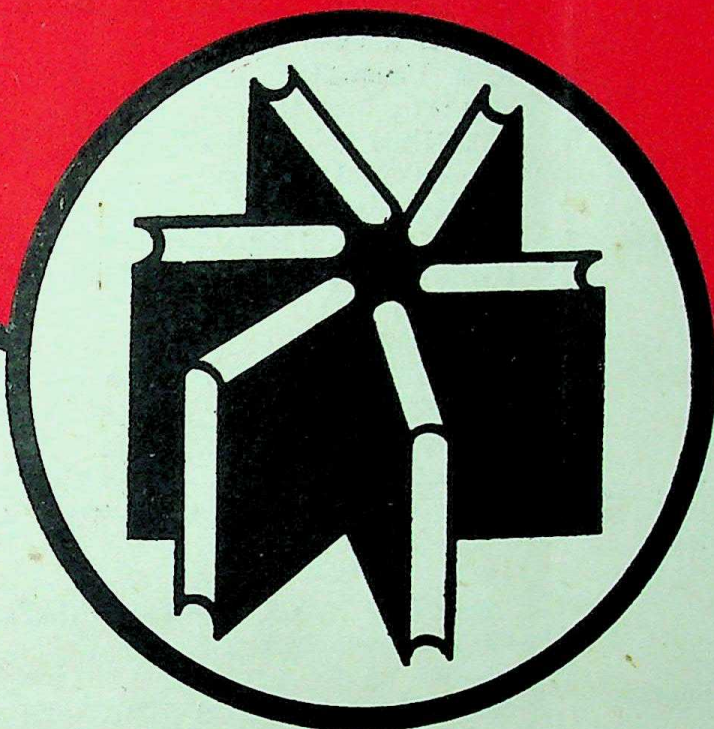
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# Indian Book Chronicle

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EDITOR : AMRIK SINGH

## Intellectual Colonisation

The role of science and technology as an important factor in East-West relations has not been studied in any great detail. It is the political relationship between the two super powers and their inter-relationship with the Third World that have been studied in detail. The economics of trade and aid and the North South dialogue have also seriously engaged the attention of scholars. It has, however, often been forgotten that the political and economic relationships may have a deeper substratum at the level of science and technology.

This is the area that Abdur Rahman seeks to study with reference to a number of situations relating primarily to the Asian experience but also applicable in a more general way to the experience of the Third World countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The title of the work obviously borrows from colonisation as an aftermath of 19th century capitalism and imperialism. While countries in the Third World have attained independence from colonial rule, in the last few decades their dependence in the field of economics and science and technology on the western world is a wellknown phenomenon. Rahman seeks to examine the mechanics of this relationship and his broad conclusion is that the western attitude towards scientific and technological growth in the Third World has been motivated by a desire to dominate the situation and to dictate favourable terms in the wider political-economic context.

## REDISCOVERING ROOTS

That science and technology should not be divorced from the socio-economic context is a truism. It is also equally important to emphasise their link with the beliefs and value-systems of a given society. It is no body's point that science and technology is a purely western product. Nor is there any need to labour the point that many countries in the Third World, and more particularly India, had a developed system of science and its applications right up to 16th and 17th century whereafter because of political and economic factors and the coming up of foreign domination the natural talent suffered a severe set back and the West rapidly went ahead in this realm of human knowledge.

**Abdur Rahman, Intellectual Colonisation : Science and Technology in West-East Relations, pp. 143, Vikas, 1983, Rs. 95.00.**



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Rahman's emphasis on the need for the scientists and technologists of Asia and Africa to rediscover their roots and re-examine its relevance in to-day's world instead of blind imitation of the West is therefore very valid. This validity is particularly important because of the known attitude of scientists in the Third World to look too much to the West for their inspiration and ideas. This, it may however be added, is not merely true in the field of science and technology. Even in the field of literature and arts the West's unhealthy shadow over the themes and styles is also a well-known factor. This was perhaps a natural result of looking to the West with envy and assume that anything Western was necessarily superior. It is also not possible to ignore the fact that even the struggle for freedom and eventual attainment of independence was partly due to the spread of Western education and exposure to liberal ideas in the 19th and 20th century.

All this led the intellectual elites in the Third World countries in the decades following independence to look upon the West as the model, be it for science and technology, economic planning, political systems and parliamentary democracy or even arts and letters. In literature for example, Marxism, stream of consciousness, and, of late, existentialism dominated the situation in most of the Third World countries. In the field of painting Paris was still the model with the post-impressionists and the surrealists dominating the scene.

#### GROWING AWARENESS

During the last two decades, however, there is in evidence a slow but sure growing awareness of the need to return to tradition and to one's own roots. The cultural self-image and identity of the Asian and African societies has been more and more emphasised by the elites of these societies. There is however still a large measure of ambivalence in this awareness. The underlying assumption that Asian-African societies are largely feudal, dominated by anti-scientific temper, superstition and dogma is, for example, dying only slowly. Intervening periods of foreign domination and rule has sagged the capacity for independent appraisal and fresh out-look on issues and problems.

This has resulted in the elites in the developing countries, and more particularly the scientists who are primarily educated in the Western tradition to ignore their own heritage and accept uncritically the Western high-power technology without trying to relate it to their economic and cultural context and priorities. The ambivalence is reflected in cultural confusion and an environment of intellectual instability. Scientific research and technological changes are not to be seen as events happening in a vacuum. They have to be viewed as part of the total effort for achieving self-reliance. While science and technology may be to some extent universal and therefore the natural genius of a particular society may

not be very relevant to its growth to the same extent as in the field of literature and art, it is necessary to also consider their linkage to given socio-economic factors. After all, scientific and technological knowledge is meant to be applied to the task of economic development and change.

#### NEUTRALITY OVERDONE

The social and political neutrality of science and technology has been somewhat overdone. The economic objective of self-reliance and pragmatic research in science and technology in no case should be divorced from the socio-economic condition. Rahman has given a very detailed and scholarly analysis of the historical perspective of science and technology linking the European domination to the Asian and African traditions. This historical perspective is beautifully worked out and gives the reader a fine picture of the development of science and technology not only in the Western countries but also in countries like Japan and China and India, the three major Eastern countries.

Earlier he has worked on the role of science and technology in medieval India and his deep understanding and knowledge in this area finds conceptual focus in this book. It is in the analysis of the intellectual colonisation through the educational system, however, that there appear to be some gaps which could have been examined in greater detail. While it is well-known that the educational system in the ex-colonies was mostly based on the need for turning out primarily clerks and persons who would be supporters of the ruling



powers, it needed further analysis to show why and how, even after attaining independence, educational systems continued to be in the same groove and did not emphasise the theme of national identity or cultural self-image. The reasons for stagnation in education and lack of progressive scientific temper which could lead to new concepts, fresh ideas and genuine discoveries and inventions needed to be studied in greater detail. Maybe our own failure to strike out our own path was as much responsible as the attitude of the Western world. We cannot continue to blame the West for all our evils and for all times to come. The hidden persuaders are there not merely in the East West relationship. They are also extremely relevant for the Western world where the technique of media management has dominated the market until one can say, in Marshal McLuhan's words, that the media is the message.

#### TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY

It is not merely in the field of education. It is also in the determination of economic priorities and transfer of technology that the Third World countries have not been able to develop and sustain an independent approach and attitude. Often it has been an attitude of sulking and admiring in turn. An adult attitude however, is one which looks upon concepts, situations and processes objectively and independently, full in the face and accepts only such of them as are suitable for the given socio-economic environment.

There is no denying the fact that every country ought to have a technology which is only appro-

priate to it and is optimum. We need not quarrel over terminologies. There need not also be a suspicion that the concept of optimum technology or appropriate technology is necessarily an attempt at intellectual colonisation. The political leadership in many Third World countries have themselves sometimes indulged in technological showmanship or one-upmanship. The most sophisticated textile technology during the last decade for example, used to be in the Third World rather than in the developed world and that too in the context of vast numbers of unemployed. There has to be a balance between the technological process and the indigenous labour and the capital markets. All these are well known but their inter-relationship is often forgotten in political and economic debates.

If the Third World is to emerge into mature adulthood it would be by way of assessing the linkages between science and technology on one hand and socio-economic development and value-systems on the other and then refixing national priorities accordingly. It cannot be by way of lamenting even while asserting, that we had a glorious tradition in

science and technology in the past or in claiming that all that we need to do today is merely to resurrect that tradition. Nor can it be by way of closing our window to the enormous developments in science and technology in the West, or rather the North, because some of it may have also relevance to us to-day in our own context.

Cultural self-image is not always in tune with the true requirements of a community and its growth. Sometimes cultural self-image has to be redefined and reassessed so that it does not become a prison-house. That would be the only way towards an intellectually honest and free society which is neither looking back to the past with wishful thinking nor on the future, and other countries with fear and suspicion. Rahman has done an excellent service in generating an awareness of this need and in stimulating concern both among the intellectuals and the masses about the urgent need for such reappraisal.

*Sitakant Mahapatra, a member of the IAS, is a well known Oriya writer & currently Secretary of Education in Orissa.*

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**IT'S SOMETHING TO BELONG TO THE GROWING MINORITY OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT INDIAN SCHOLARSHIP DESERVES TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.**

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## The Moderates & Tilak

B. R. Nanda

The Moderate Era in Indian Politics

pp. 31, OUP, 1983, Rs. 8.00

N. R. Inamdar, Editor.

Political Thought and Leadership of Lokmanya Tilak

pp. XL+348, Concept, Rs. 100.00; \$20.

Reviewed by J. V. Naik

The two books under review are written around themes of two schools of Indian nationalist thought and leadership, the Moderates and the Extremists, before the advent of the Gandhian era. While the professed aim of B. R. Nanda's slim volume, which is his Dada-bhai Naoroji Prize Fund Lecture, is to secure and preserve the memory of the Moderates from passing into oblivion, the declared object of the volume containing *Lokmanya Tilak Seminar* papers, twenty-nine in number, edited by N. R. Inamdar is "to review and examine both the historical role and contemporary relevance of Tilak's thought and leadership".

### MODERATES DEFENDED

Nanda's Lecture is little more than a rehash of his earlier well-researched and indeed excellent work, *Gokhale: The Indian Moderates and the British Raj* (New Delhi, Oxford 1977). It is a brief but neat restatement of his thesis that Moderate leadership was both realistic and pragmatic, and the constitutional approach it adopted was possibly the only sensible course that could be followed in the given situation. However, in his near obsession to establish

the greatness of the Moderates, Nanda fails to come to grips with what he himself has rightly admitted, 'a multiple situation forever on the move', and in the process does scant justice to the Extremists. If the Moderates harnessed the horses of reason in their sincere efforts to arouse the conscience of the obstinate and even indifferent bureaucracy, the Extremists unchained the tigers of emotion with a view to providing the nationalist agitation with a much needed mass base. The complexities of the situation necessitated a multi-pronged attack and the demolition of the belief that British rule was a "Divine Dispensation".

Therefore, rather than simply blame the Extremists for the course they advocated, it would be more profitable to investigate in depth the causes of Extremism. The assumption that the Moderates are not given their due recognition in the country's struggle for freedom, to say the least, is preposterous. No serious student of Indian freedom struggle has ever lightly dismissed the role of the Moderates, especially that of Gokhale, in shaping the national movement in its formative years. Tilak himself has described Gokhale as "the diamond of India,

the jewel of Maharashtra and the prince of workers." And that should suffice.

The volume of papers edited by Inamdar deserves a more detailed consideration, both for its size and contents and also because it might serve, though indirectly, a corrective to Nanda's relatively low opinion of the Extremist leadership.

### VIGOROUS & VARIED

A multifaceted personality, so vigorous and varied as that of Tilak, defies an easy historical assessment. There have been numerous attempts on the part of Indian as well as Western scholars to discover the individual and the political leader that Tilak was. Some have been worshippers at his idol; others have been unsparing in their criticism of his opinions, methods and aims. Of the many biographies of Tilak, the one by G. P. Pradhan and A. K. Bhagwat (1959) remains, perhaps, the most balanced and comprehensive to date. The publication of *Samagra Lokmanya Tilak* (Collection of Marathi and English Writings and Speeches) in several volumes by the Kesari-Maratha Prakashan has added immensely to these existing primary source materials on the subject.

Though pre-eminently a political leader, best known as "The Father of Indian Unrest", Lokmanya Tilak was a scholar in the true sense of the word; he was also a first rate journalist. Above all he was a patriot and his patriotism, in the words of S. Radhakrishna, was "a blend of political, moral and religious strands". Attainment of Swaraj was his



primary aim. Being a man of practical genius, he brushed aside everything that interfered with his political programme with the ruthlessness of a born strategist. He seems to have been convinced that social reform, if taken up as a plank in his work, was likely to seriously interfere with the kind of public opinion it was his ambition to build up. He, therefore, not only claimed primacy of political reform over social reforms but did his best to ridicule what he termed "new-fangled, half-baked reformers". For this he came in for sharp criticism. He was weary of the nibbling tactics of the Moderates and wanted to carry the fight into the enemy camp. He used revivalist symbols to stimulate militant nationalism which apparently ran counter to the Moderate ideal of "humane, democratic and secular nationalism". But even his opponents knew that behind all this there was a great man, a self-less man in whose mind love of motherland was the uppermost thought.

All this and more is treated in the essays by twenty-nine authors with a preface and an elaborate introduction by Inamdar. The editor, however, has not thematically grouped the papers into distinct sections which adds to the difficulty of reviewing such a volume. The essays are of uneven quality. While some of them are good empirical exercises, others tend to be too generous in their generalizations and conclusions to carry much conviction.

#### DISINTERESTED KARMA

The first paper in the volume "Tilak's Spiritual Nationalism"

by V. P. Varma who has written a full-length book: *Life and Philosophy of Lokmanya Tilak* (1978). So far as the present paper is concerned, we are one with the Editor in somewhat doubting the validity of Varma's thesis that Tilak consciously nurtured the sentiment of spiritual nationalism. Indeed, Tilak "was too much of a pragmatist to harp on the ethereal sentiment of spiritual nationalism". Tilak's religious and moral philosophy is competently dealt with in two papers, one by V. R. Karandikar and the other by S. R. Talghatti. In his learned paper, Karandikar critically examines all aspects of Tilak's religious and ethical thought as revealed in his *magnum opus*, the *Gitarahasya*.

Karandikar does not seem to approve of Tilak's giving low priority to Bhakti as a mode of Realization. He attributes it to Tilak's "desultory reading" of the works of Maharashtrian saints like Dnyaneshwar and Waman Pandit. He also seems to be justified in arguing: "Because Tilak's ethical and philosophical outlook was influenced by Hindu religion and Shastras, he could not see social issues from a secular angle". Karandikar is absolutely right in concluding that the everlasting contribution of Tilak to national life was his life-long fight against the age-old tendency towards *Nivrutti* and in summoning people to action. Therefore, he deserves to be venerated as "the high-priest of disinterested Karma". Talghatti's paper competently deals with "the moral theory" advocated by Tilak. He entirely agrees with Tilak that the unity of *Jnan-Bhakti-Karma* in the

form of *Karmayoga* is the central teaching of the Gita.

Nalini Pandit in her provocative paper "Tilak and Indian Nationalism" (particularly in its three concluding sub-sections viz., 'Revivalist nationalism', 'Religious exclusiveness and caste antagonism' and 'Class ascendancy or class compromise') makes some bold assertions which are highly debatable. She states that Tilak's leadership was "confined to high caste urban intellectuals and petty bourgeoisie" and that he failed to command the allegiance of the rural strata of the population. Tilak's opposition to the passing of the 'first Factory Act in 1891' (sic) and the stand he took on the rights of the *Khots* are cited as examples of his lack of "awareness of the exploitation and injustices perpetrated by these classes over the lower sections of the community."

#### TILAK & REVIVALISM

In this context, it may be pointed out that Tilak was not the only nationalist leader to oppose the first Factory Act; nor the British plan to reduce the Indian competition was the only ground on which the Act came to be opposed. Again, would it be right to regard men like Justice Ranade, who also opposed that legislation, as rabid champions of narrow class interests? More importantly, had Tilak opposed workers' interests as such then how could one explain their going spontaneously on the first ever major strike immediately on hearing Tilak being sentenced to rigorous imprisonment on a sedition charge! Tilak opposed the government in-



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terference with the rights of the *Khots*. So did Vishwanath Narain Mandlik. Apparently they were wrong in doing so and, therefore, deserve to be censured. However, the problem was not as simple as is made out to be and one should reserve one's final judgement on this issue till an in-depth study is made on the *Khoti* tenure. Prof. (Mrs.) Pandit also holds Tilak responsible for the promotion of revivalist nationalism which she thinks did more harm than good to the country and goes on to conclude that "the political tradition which claims him to be its source and inspiration is proving to be the main object of hatred of the radical youth of all backward castes in Maharashtra". This is too sweeping a generalisation to stand the test of historical scrutiny.

In his essay on "The Indian Renaissance and Lokmanya Tilak" V. A. Naik laments "the defeat of renaissance and the rise of revivalism in India". He, however, not only wholly exonerates Tilak on that count but even projects him as "one of the most progressive thinkers and leaders which this country has produced". Naik's attempt in this regard tends to be more eulogistic than critical. A. H. Doctor's article "Tilak's Approach to Nation-Building" follows the beaten track. He has nothing new or useful to say. P. J. Jagirdar brings out fairly the differing conceptions of nationalism held by Ranade and Tilak. Shanta Sathe gives a lucid exposition of Tilak's connotation of the concept of Swaraj. Irrelevant analogies and excessive hyperbole mar the logic of R. Srinivasan's otherwise well-composed essay on "The

Conservatism of Tilak". To give but one instance, Srinivasan regards the partition of Bengal as "the Indian equivalent to the French Revolution...."

#### COLONIAL BUREAUCRACY

N.R. Inamdar in his well illustrated and very well argued paper has discussed at length Tilak's thought on colonial bureaucracy and administration. He has ably demonstrated how the two basic features of Weberian concept of bureaucracy viz. independence of judgement and anonymity could not and did not operate in the

colonial frame-work. K. Shashadri in his paper "Tilak, the Leader and the Harbinger of India's Mass Upsurge" makes a valid point when he argues that the leadership typology conceived by Max Weber or Laswell does not fit into Indian social and political condition.

Indira Rothermund's essay on "Political Leadership of Tilak" is based on well-known facts and hence does not invite any special attention. In his paper "Tilak's Philosophy of Law" S. P. Sath has pointed out that while Tilak hated British rule, he admired the British system of justice. Regard

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ing Tilak's vehement opposition to social legislation, Sathe raises a very pertinent question: "Did he oppose the law as such or did he oppose English made law?" In his opinion "the fact that the foreign power was the law maker merely suited Tilak's conservatism". Judging from Tilak's hostility to social reform, Sathe seems to be right in his observation that Tilak looked to law as a means of stability rather than change. He had no vision of social change apart from political independence'.

N. V. Sovani in a matter-of-fact essay on "Economic Thought of Tilak" while taking due note of pre-1904 economic writings of Tilak makes it clear that Tilak was far too occupied with political problems to contribute anything original to the Indian economic thought. V. K. Kshire has nothing new to contribute on "Tilak's Thoughts on Constitutional Reforms". V. P. Deo treats Tilak as legislator and evaluates his work in the Council during the years 1895-1897. S. N. Tawale states the obvious when he says that Tilak's observations on international events were conditioned by his considerations of India's freedom. S. M. Garge's cursory discussion of Tilak's view of history mainly with reference to a few historical works reviewed by Tilak is unsatisfying. He notes Tilak's admission that "We have become aware of history and historical principles through our pursuit and study of the knowledge of the West".

#### TILAK & SECULARISM

A. B. Shah in his paper "Tilak and Secularism" makes a cogent

case to establish that "in the context of his times Tilak was as secular as a political leader with a growing mass following could be". He takes Aziz Ahmed, Rafiq Zakaria and K. K. Aziz to task for suggesting that Tilak was opposed to Muslim interests. Moin Shakir and J. R. Shinde in their paper "Tilak and the Question of Religious Politics in India" generally agree with the stand taken by Shah and sympathise with Tilak's dilemma on the question of social reform.

The essays by Vandana Talekar, B. K. Kelkar, V. M. Bachal, Y. N. Sumant, S. T. Naigaonkar and P. L. Joshi are useful exercises in understanding the role of Tilak in the organisation and activities of

the Congress during its different phases in different regions.

"Tilak and Total Revolution" by R. D. Kher is a poor effort; so is K. K. Kavlekar's "Politics of Social Reform in Maharashtra". L. N. Gokhale's essay on "Tilak as Journalist" is also not quite upto mark. Obviously some of the essays find a place in this volume due rather to the generosity of the editor than their intrinsic merit. Making allowance for a few such essays, the volume on the whole is a distinct contribution to the study of different facets of Lokmanya's personality. We therefore, recommend it to students of modern Indian History.

*J. V. Naik is Reader in History at the University of Bombay.*

## Painting in Kutch

B. N. Goswami and A. L. Dallapiccola

**A Place Apart: Painting in Kutch, 1720-1820**

pp. 95, colour illustrations 30 and 37 black and white illustrations, Oxford University Press, 1983, Rs 400.00.

**Reviewed by Mira Seth**

Kutch which juts out in the Indian Ocean has traditionally attracted tribal migrations, adventurers and refugees from the more hospitable northern plains. It saw the onslaught of the Arabs, the earliest Muslims to invade India. It soon returned back to Hindu rule and from twelfth century the rule of the Jadejas begins. They came into contact with the Mughals in the reign of Rao Bharmal (1585-1621 A.D.). One of his successors, Desalji (1718-41), rose to be a patron of painting.

There are two phases of Kutch painting—one prior to European

influences, beginning in the reign of Desalji (1718-41 A.D.) and the other towards the end of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century after European influences had started filtering in.

#### INDIGENEOUS STYLE

As far as the indigenous style is concerned the Kutch painters seem to have concentrated on painting portraits, *darbar* scenes and royal processions. There is a concentration on male figures almost to the exclusion of depictions of the female form. The authors have



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not pin pointed the reasons for the birth of painting here, but two surmises are given—one the contact with the Mughal *darbar* and the other, a royal marriage with the son of Maharaja Abhay Singh of Jodhpur. Stylistic derivations are not brought out. A deeper study of Marwar painting of this period does not show any remarkable resemblance with Kutch styles. If there was any learning to be done it seems to have been exclusively on the Kutchi side. It cannot even be said that the Kutchi artists were good pupils. Marwar painting of this period has a bright powerful style full of intensity as well as movement. The Kutchi paintings are, however, rather static, and formal as seen at least from the illustrations, presented in this book. They are not remarkable by any standard. They seem, however, to have shown beautiful textile designs, birds and architectures in a realistic manner.

As far as European impact is concerned a large body of Kutchi paintings seem to be clearly influenced by them. The impact could have been derived from the visits of Kutchi artisans to Europe in the company of an exceptional man who was basically a navigator namely Ram Singh sent by Lakhpatri Ji and through the import of a large number of European prints which flooded the Indian markets in the nineteenth century. The authors point out that the artists of Kutch at first blindly copied the European prints and painted a number of townscapes of European towns like Venice, Rome, Vienna, London, Jerusalem and Cairo. They also copied the famous European churches and palaces. Most of the copies are

surprisingly good while others tended to be stilted with a few mistakes in drawing as the Indian painter continued to be tuned in to his linear approach. The mediums of colour used are also different. Sometimes more than one artist was engaged in making these exact copies.

#### EUROPEAN IMPACT

The Kutchi painters however, soon absorbed European skills and moved away from pure imitation to making their original creations. The results of this absorption are beautiful townscapes, seascapes and landscapes typical of Kutchi region with an almost impressionistic European touch. The authors admit that similar absorption of European styles took place almost everywhere in India but they do not compare this absorption with any other remarkable body of Indian painting. In Rajasthan for

example a number of miniatures and wall paintings exist in this genre in Jaipur, Shekhawati, and Jaisalmer. Here again the artists have imbibed the European prints to give their own original interpretations within a basic Indianness of style.

This book's contribution lies in bringing to our notice the paintings of Kutch in a detailed methodical manner for the first time. Making such studies of the painting styles of the different regions of India deserves to be encouraged. Such works should however, be reasonably priced unlike the present volume so that they can be bought widely by individuals and not only by libraries.

*Mira Seth, a member of the IAS is currently Secretary of Health in the Government of Har- yana.*

## Moving & Evocative

Jayanta Mahapatra

*Life Signs*

pp. 48, *Three Crowns Publications, New Poetry in India*, OUP  
Rs. 25.00.

**Reviewed by Sandhya Bordewekar**

*Life Signs* is a collection of some of the most moving and evocative poems created by Jayanta Mahapatra. Words flow rhythmically, combining sound and image, always reined in by a landscape where time has stood in stagnant stillness. An example—

#### RIVER

This river,  
haunted and grave

by the last cries of men  
trying to reach  
the opposite shore.  
Open-mouthed  
like the water,  
memory.  
Across the flat priestly darkness  
an egret appears  
flapping greyly,  
and it sounds  
like the weary thump  
of my dead grandfather's heart



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following me

where the wind breaks water.  
(pg. 28).

In "Dead River" (pg. 6), each stanza forms a separate visual and yet each one moves undisturbed into the other. The poems are intense, tortured, introspective. The poet does not shout. "Who am I to play God with good intentions" he asks in "The Quality of Ruins". "My grief" he concludes "is to endure the words of the living,/those men/who become more distant everyday,/whose bodies have been torn apart/and face one another now,/ indecently, like old ruins."

There is a deep sense of the inevitability of things, of events which cannot be changed, of a decadence that has seized the entire environment. The landscape may be Orissa—a state symbolic of religion and temples, undisturbed landscape, extreme poverty and a people moving in a sleepy haze; the problems confronted through the poetry relate the anguish of the land to that of the poet. The defeat is personal. "Will a poem of mine be the only answer" (pg. 45) is wrenched with doubts, a profound despair. In "Morning Signs" (pg. 47), the failure of the poet is linked to the failure of the social structure "As I grow into another day/in which I hear/only the clink of my skeleton/ behind my back."

"Grandfather" (pg. 19) is a touching evocation, the poet and his son trying to understand the emotions (humanness?) of the poet's grandfather, who, starving and on the point of death embraced Christianity during the terrible famine that struck Orissa in 1866.

Now in a night of sleep and taunting rain my son and I speak of that famine nameless as stone.

We wish we knew you more.

We wish we knew what it was to be, against dying,/to know the dignity/that had to be earned dangerously,/your last chance that was blindly terrifying, so unfair./

We wish we had not to wake up with our smiles/in the middle of some social order.

In "The Lost Children of America" (pg. 23) the poet paints the invasion of Orissa by hippies.

No one knows them,  
they are free, the common men  
soft and green of gesture, pre-occupied/ with their hidden  
songs of mankind,/mind blown  
by acid and amphetamines/and  
we watch them go by/with  
vague feelings of exaltation and  
disquiet.

They are the people we do not need to know:/ they for instance, do not travel as guests/of Rotary International or the UNO."

The poet compares their lostness with his own.

We gaze at each other in silence, the lost child and I;/who knows who is playing a joke on whom?/ What can drive me from these mean, sordid alleys where I live?/Who is the one among us misled by vision,/more real than real,/that has filled homes with tremulous ash/and has brought from hunger unassuaged/the haunted myth?"

But it is a "time of darknesses" and both the lost children and the poet have to come to terms with a "history" which "does not reverberate any more/with the pulse of the drum/ or with the chant of the tide on a sacred Puri shore—"

These thematic preoccupations are embellished by a language, a literary idiom which surprises intellectually and delights with its unusualness. In "The Vase" (pg. 37), "We look around today and the day after tomorrow,/remembering those who caught us like irrigation-canals/across the dry nights in the distant countryside, ..." In "Summer's End" (pg. 32), "I can do nothing for you, dear friend,/nothing for the bad dream/ which, like a frightened mouse,/ scampers by here and there, only to crouch/behind some dark cupboard in fear." In "A Day" (pg. 31), "The smoke trembles/in-to maps, abrades my eyes." In "Total Solar Eclipse" (pg. 21), "Slowly the vultures turn away/ from the still-warm belly of the sky,/recognising the silence of the black wind/whose throat drips horizons of fire./ Sparrows converge upon the palpitating gulmo-har,/leaves already seamed for sleep."

At this rate I will probably be quoting the entire book. It's an irresistible urge, no doubt. *Life Signs* is certainly a well-chiselled volume of poems. Mahapatra jolts you alright, gently yet with tremendous energy. It is one of his most significant works.

*Sandhya Bordewekar is a Baroda-based free lance writer and critic.*



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## A Model & Its Failure

David Anthony Pinto

The Mayor, the Commissioner and Metropolitan Administration (Bombay).

pp. xii+273, Vikas, 1984, Rs. 150.00 in India only.

Reviewed by Ali Ashraf

David Anthony Pinto served in various capacities, including as Secretary to the Mayor and to the Bombay Municipal Corporation for over three decades and has therefore the insider's familiarity with the working of this corporation. Familiarity breeds both insight and smugness, and there is evidence of both in the book.

### TOUGH OR PLIABLE

The author dwells on the evolution and working of Bombay Municipal Corporation and specially focusses on the ticklish problem of the relationship between the executive and the legislative wings of the Municipal Corporation. Coming to the conclusion that the role of the Mayor and the Municipal Commission is complementary, Pinto goes on to analyse the different types of municipal commissioners with some insight and the impact of personality and workstyle on the role of the municipal commissioner. The treatment is rich in details and avoids generalities. Writing about the various types of municipal commissioners, for example, he categorises the commissioners into tough disciplinarians and pliable populists. These 'pliable' commissioners however did not necessarily have good time and their administration could not avoid being chaotic or weak and therefore susceptible to exploitation by the councillors.

The merit of this sort of appraisal is that it makes the treatment of the problem realistic and draws attention to the fact that the personality of the incumbents in top administrative posts is a vital matter. This is true in all administrative organizations, no matter what the formal structure may be. The observation is correct at all levels of organisations and the studies of Presidents and Prime Ministers as well as leaders of city governments confirm the truth of this observation. It is to the credit of Pinto that he has put his finger on this sensitive phenomenon in the administration of a municipal corporation. This is further underlined by the impact of strong personality such as Vithalbhai Patel, when he was a nationalist leader and later mayor of Bombay Corporation. The high tribute paid to the Mayors, of Bombay is a reminder of the fact that mayors, however ceremonial their position may be, are important in upholding democratic spirit and also high standards of efficiency in municipal administration.

### FAILURE OF BOMBAY MODEL

Pinto however takes note of the failure of the Bombay model in Calcutta and rightly concludes: "It is, therefore, futile to be enthusiastic about a particular system of local self-government which in fact, works at one place and

not another."

This underlines the need to make comparative study of local bodies or other organisations, in order to look behind both personality of leaders and officials as well as formal structures of organisations. Personalities are bound to vary any where, and organisational structures provide only the framework of authority and its allocation among various functionaries. The question as to why some local bodies function well and others don't is an important one, but not clearly answered by the plethora of studies and doctoral dissertations.

The recent supersession of Bombay Municipal Corporation however renders Pinto's following conclusion problematic:

'Prima facie the present system in the Bombay Municipal Corporation.... does not warrant any structural change. In this context, it is significant that the Bombay Municipal Corporation is the only Corporation in the country that has not been superseded even once in its chequered history.'

Ahmedabad is a close second as Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation was superseded only once, and that too on account of its nationalist role before independence. The facts that Bombay and Ahmedabad Municipal Corporations have had no supersession and still show better functioning is remarkable and very instructive. The most superseded municipal corporation of Calcutta has an extremely dismal record. The critical question in this connection centres around the civic and administrative conditions for the effective functioning of self-government in cities, towns and villages. It is therefore necessary to explore and



identify the civic, political and administrative conditions conducive to the development of local bodies into autonomous and problem-solving local governments. That local self-government is easily and frequently destroyed in the largest democracy of the world

is a stigma both on the local bodies and the higher governments. The grassroot democracy is still a dream and also the real long term task of democracy in India.

*Ali Ashraf is Vice Chancellor of Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi.*

## Social Transformation in Rural India

T. K. Oommen

**Social Transformation in Rural India—Mobilisation and State Intervention**

pp. x+325, Vikas, Rs 125.00.

**Reviewed by Sanjit Roy**

This book is for the academics and the intellectuals: it is not for the practitioners in the field. There is much that T. K. Oommen says that action oriented researchers can argue with very convincingly even though, as he admits, there are two ways that rural society could be viewed—from within and from outside. Oommen is obviously looking at rural society from the outside or else he would not have so gallantly pressed on with his point of the need for State intervention for social transformation. Indeed is this possible is the question.

The track record of many States indicate how 'inspiration' from the State to institutionalise change has proved disastrous and has acted against the interests of the poor. It remains to be seen what Oommen means by, change', 'social transformation 'and' mobilisation'. In the essays that have been compiled over the years (1965-1980) there is much he has taken for granted and though it may be apparent that his stand on these is-

sues has changed I submit he is still somewhat "impervious to changing social reality and indifferent to critical issues faced by the emerging social order".

### WHICH PEOPLE?

On the one hand Oommen feels that the State should inspire and institutionalise change: on the other he feels this can only be actualised through the active involvement and participation of the people. This may be acceptable at the Central and State levels but as one goes lower the 'people' who represent the State and the 'people' who do not want active involvement and participation are one and the same. In other words, the patwari, the thanedar, the school teacher, the gram sevak, the cooperative inspector who represent the State at the village level are the very people who i) claim to know the problems of the poor and speak on their behalf ii) look very unkindly at the whole process of involving the

poor and participating in decision making. When we talk of peoples participation so glibly we do not take the trouble to be more precise about 'which' people we are talking about. If it is peoples participation in general or what Oommen calls 'popular participation' in rural development this regrettably is already happening—to the extent that the poor are kept away.

By State intervention presumably Oommen means the policy of the government to encourage popular participation by sponsoring and financing voluntary organisations. Oommen feels that since voluntary organisations are dependent on government finance they are constrained to act as extensions of State apparatus which erodes the enthusiastic involvement of the people in programmes initiated by these agencies.

It is this chapter in his book that is his weakest and I must expand on this to explain why.

### POOR EXAMPLE

He has taken a very poor example of a voluntary agency in the Bharat Sevak Samaj. Maybe at that time in the early 50s to the early 60s it was the only one of its kind. It was a premier national voluntary organisation with branches in all the States. It operated at the grass root level through 315 district branches, 200 city and town centres and over 5000 village units. It had a cadre of 160 life workers, 10,000 full time workers and about 2.5 lakh ordinary members in 1966.

I wish Oommen in his Introduction had been a bit more fair and asked the right questions than



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jumping to hasty conclusions. To my mind some questions that come to my mind immediately are, When does a voluntary agency cease to be a voluntary agency? Where political parties and party politics are involved, can it really be called a voluntary agency? If an NGO takes funds from the government does it cease to be voluntary? Can a voluntary agency function without government support of any kind? Oommen has not asked these questions pointedly enough and generalised on the unhappy experience of one organisation to conclude "The case of BSS vividly demonstrates the unanticipated consequences of the government sponsoring and financing voluntary organisations. Once the government help is withdrawn

such organisations become crippled and they do not have a self sustaining base."

What the BSS debacle did manage to do quite successfully is to cast suspicions on all voluntary effort for subsequent generations. Young bureaucrats then who are senior officials in the Central Government now still quote the BSS experience. But voluntary agencies themselves have learnt a lot since then even though there are still some agencies that compare with the BSS and who have not asked the right sort of questions themselves. That apart, the fact that voluntary agencies have come to recognise the importance of management techniques and the need for a degree of professionalism for better and more effective

popular participation are inputs that have received little attention from Oommen.

Granted Oommen's analysis of the Sarvodaya approach along with the Bhoodan and Gramdan movements does contain many valid observations and he has not stopped himself from being critical of the movement, still, I would have expected Oommen to come up with something more original on popular participation in general and voluntary agencies in particular. His paper on Popular Participation in Rural Development is particularly disappointing. If his list of references are any indication apart from the Sarvodaya agencies and the pontification of the Government of India on the subject, there seem to be no other

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agencies or approaches worth the name.

#### AUTONOMY

His conclusion that the autonomy of the voluntary agencies are eroded because they have accepted government funds is not quite true: the voluntary agencies themselves have compromised their own autonomy by being weak and wishy-washy over issues, bending over backwards to please the government. We should blame the leaders of the voluntary agencies for being weak, not the government for giving money. There are two issues here and they need to be tackled differently.

I find the strategy Oommen has suggested for eradicating untouchability and institutionalising change (evidently through State intervention is bringing many more into the mainstream of education.

"Once the erstwhile untouchables become educated, experience an upward economic mobility and acquire political clout their emancipation from ritual degradation will not only come with relative ease, in fact the ritual dimension may be rendered increasingly redundant."

It is all very well to say this but in actual practice it is not so simple. Though Oommen has statistically shown that access to educational opportunities has definitely resulted in emancipation of sorts there is little evidence to prove that we are willing to make it easy for the untouchables. Legal protection notwithstanding access to education at the primary and middle school level is reflected in the disturbing figures of drop out rates among scheduled castes and tribes. What is more disturb-

ing is that the Government is not in a position to respond to their felt needs adequately. For instance they are not in a position to send their children to schools in the morning but they are free in the evenings, but no such arrangements exist on a large scale for scheduled castes and harijans.

#### IRONICAL

The irony of it all is that the educated scheduled castes and harijans exploit their own castes the most and there is enough evidence to suggest that a very small section of the educated 'untouchables' reap the most benefits and they actually prevent others from progressing as fast. Oommen would have done well to highlight these issues as well.

I like the paper on State Sponsored Organisations for the Depri-

ved where Oommen very clearly and effectively illustrates why Harijan Cooperatives are unsatisfactory and not worth encouraging until and unless drastic measures are taken to make land reform policies more meaningful and a process of politicisation of the weak takes place.

I feel he is at his best in part III of the book though I wish his style had been simpler. The point he makes on the non-violent approach to land reforms is well taken but institutional reform has not kept up with the times and this has made the Gramdan movement in India a movement worth admiring but hardly possible to copy. Not in this day and age.

*Sanjit Roy is Director of the Tilonia Rural Project in Ajmer, Rajasthan.*

## Lacking in Rigour

B. Kumar

### Monetary Policy in India

pp. x+294, *Amar Prakashan*, Lawrence Road, Delhi, 1983, Rs. 120.00.

Reviewed by H. N. Roy

Should economic theories be framed for their own sake or for the sake of making useful policy prescriptions? This way of asking the question may not be the right one and may offend many economists. To those who insist on the social-science character of our discipline, the answer is an obvious one—at the macro-level we frame theories for the purpose of making predictions about the prospective behaviour of the economy in order to make corrections by policy

instruments if the economy deviates from some well-defined path of growth with stability. Efficient economic management is our aim. No doubt mathematical model building, as such, has its own elegance and appeal. But this cannot be a sufficient condition for the study of economics.

Students of Economics are often faced with conflicting theories and contradictory policy prescriptions, and nowhere is this more pronounced than in the field of



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money. Is monetary expansion the prime cause of inflationary price rise, or is it a consequence of other forces? Should inflation be controlled and cured by monetary measures, or are other measures more effective? These are the questions which pester us today all over the world. Yet professional economists are at loggerheads and cannot agree on the advice they give.

The difference, of course, has its roots in the alternative macro-models of the economy that these economists adopt and their differing view of the transmission process of a change in the stock of money or other monetary magnitudes. In the last analysis, however, the conflict can be resolved only on the empirical plane, because the empirical relevance of the model ultimately becomes crucial to the debate. Much too long the economists have been arguing about the question whether 'money does matter' or 'it does not'. No economists today would deny that money does matter since we operate in a monetary exchange economy. But the extent to which money influences economic activity depends on the nature and the structure of the economy. Since the nature and structure vary as between countries, the study of the monetary policy experiences of individual countries becomes useful and rewarding exercises. By a comparative study, then, we may glean some common elements, if any, in the theory and conduct of monetary policy.

#### SCISSORS & PASTE POLICY

B. Kumar's book (originally his doctoral thesis)—*Monetary Policy in India*—is to be judged from the

above point of view. It is quite well-known that doctoral theses seldom make good reading. This is more so in this particular case. This is a badly written book—confused, ill-organized, full of undigested materials and having not a single original idea. The author does not have any framework of his own; he does not give his readers any idea about the nature of the Indian macroeconomy that he might have in his view. What he does instead is to depend entirely on the official publications of the Reserve Bank of India. This, by no means, is to be judged as a significant defect. What is to be faulted, however, is his uncritical acceptance of the RBI views, on all occasions, as gospel truth. Even inaccuracies in the official report are allowed to creep in. For instance, the calculation of the Net Liquidity Ratio (p. 14) is wrong (rather meaningless) since the author does only add up the total (net) liquid assets and does not tell us with which it is compared. This mistake was in the original official report which has been repeated by the author. This one instance exemplifies what egregious blunders one can commit if one follows scissors and paste policy.

To Kumar official publications are always sacrosanct. He has given extensive quotations from the Plan documents in regard to the declining importance attached to monetary policy over the successive plans. So far so good. But what is expected of him is to show whether this is justified both on analytical and empirical grounds. Nothing of this sort is to be found in his book. In this context (p. 45) he mentions that "The Monetary Policy and Planning has not been

integrated with the overall planning process in the country." This is partly true. But what is incumbent on him as an analyst is to show how this could be done. Some concrete suggestions which could be made viable in the Indian context would have been more appropriate. This the author fails to offer.

This book, I am afraid, is full of many blemishes. One can easily detect errors of all kinds—conceptual, logical and quantitative—scattered all over the book. One fundamental objection to the author's presentation of facts is that he has not used any modern econometric technique to test his conclusions. It is not implied that econometric testing is the ultimate in economic analysis. Nevertheless, since monetary econometrics is so well-developed today as a special field of study and since econometric tools are so extensively used for testing rival hypotheses, the author ought to have made econometric testing of his own definitive judgments. If Kumar had any positive reason for not using this method he should have told us why he adopts the alternative methodology.

#### DEFICIENT

The book is deficient in theoretical analysis. Facts are important but they do not speak for themselves. Some kind of theory is required in explaining the nature of the facts and their behaviour in the economy. This deficiency is clearly brought out in the chapter on the Monetary Transmission Mechanism: A Theoretical Profile. The literature on the monetary transmission mechanism is vast and growing. But the author



seems to be unacquainted with this literature. Nor, it seems, has he read Friedman's original works. Otherwise why in explaining and analysing the monetarist school of thought does he quote (often extensively) from a minor work on Monetarists and Keynesians by Brian Morgan? And then again he has accepted Morgan's view as the last word of wisdom. So also with the Keynesian theory. Here Kumar's mentor, strangely enough, is Dudley Dillard, and only Dillard and none else. Fortunately, there are two references to the Master's work—Keynes's *General Theory*. But one suspects that these two quotations—very well-known even to the beginning students—have also been taken from Dillard's book. In Kumar's interpretation of the monetarist doctrine here is no mention of the role of price expectations. He therefore fails to establish the monetarist theory of monetary policy that in the short-run money supply may have some impact (possibly destabilising) on economic activity, but in the long run only the price level is affected. The implicit assumption of the symmetric response of borrowers and lenders to the expectation of the price change which is required to insulate the real sector from the effects of monetary change needs to be clearly brought out if we want to attach any importance to the monetarist thesis. Why the non-symmetric cases would not be quite common in practice is not quite clear from Friedman's analysis. In this context some discussion of the Rational Expectations School of monetary policy would not have been quite out of place.

Our author's knowledge of the history of economic thought is

not beyond dispute. Do David Hume, Richard Cantillon and John Locke belong to the classical school? Kumar lumps all of them under the classical school (p. 170), and that also without any hesitation. Kumar's interpretation of the classical monetary theory makes strange reading. "Monetary theories of the classical writers emphasise that the money stock affects the economic activities." This view does not tally with our conventional understanding of the classical monetary theory. In one sentence our author cavalierly brushes aside 'the classical dichotomy debate as non-existent. But, fortunately for us, on page 171, our author contradicts himself and comes to our rescue: "The basic drawback of the classical or Neo-classical approach was their assumptions that the Value Theory and the Monetary Theory were independent theories. The theory of value assumed that money supply has no effect on the demand side of the commodities." Money supply, in this framework, is obviously related to the absolute price level.

#### PERFUNCTORY

The author has taught us (rightly or wrongly one can easily judge) many things we didn't know before. For instance, we are told that Inflationary Gap Theory was developed by Rent Hansen (p. 176). "'Inside money' consists of public debt which are used for purchasing private securities." (p. 177) Friedman's statistical analysis has shown "the relative stability of monetary velocity and the investment multiplier in the United States during 1897-1958" (p. 178). "In Keynes' General Theory the Monetary Policy has been assign-

ed a positive role in securing the aim of full employment replacing the Quantity bias of the classicals" (p. 169). Is Kumar thinking on the lines of Hicks theory as developed in *The Crisis in Keynesian Economics*? Kumar keeps us in the dark on this point. Similarly how could Kumar assert that the RBI authorities have not paid any attention to the growth of NFI's in restructuring our monetary policy because "there is no theory of finance available"? All these howlers are chosen at random to show how perfunctory and thoughtless one could be in one's analysis and interpretation. Capping all is the havoc done by the printer's devil. Has the book been proof read at all?

The final chapter—the Quest for Policy Alternatives—makes bizarre reading. It is not quite clear what is the author's suggestions about the monetary policy frame for India. It seems he wants to incorporate Brazilian type of indexing into the monetarist rule of a non-discretionary targeted money supply. In order to be more thorough-going he wants to impose an incomes policy upon it. It does not bother him at all that the monetarist approach to monetary policy is non-interventionist—that is the reason why a fixed monetary rule is prescribed—whereas indexation to protect real income is grossly interventionist, and these two do not fit. Our intellectual difficulties deepen when we try to enlist incomes policy as well. One should not forget the monetarist philosophy when one is recommending a monetarist type of reform for monetary management. We have accepted the philosophy of market intervention at several points of the economy



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while allowing a substantial role for the private sector industries. This makes monetary management in the conventional sense a difficult job.

It should also be mentioned that quite often we attach an exaggerated importance to the role of money supply in the economy. The monetarist doctrine of the money supply being the prime variable in inducing changes in prices and in the money national income has not been scientifically verified. Even U.S. data did not conclusively establish the correlation. From Indian data we cannot say anything very definite. We have periods of high prices associated with periods of increasing money supply, but money supply has not shown any distinct decline in its growth rate even in the periods of falling prices (e.g. 1953-54 or 1974-76). Money supply may be taken as an index of the inflationary forces operating in the economy; it would be wrong to assign it a causative role. It is very surprising that Kumar in estimating the impact of monetary policy on economic activity has nowhere mentioned the problem of lags in the effect of monetary policy. The presence of long and variable lags complicate the situation. What is the structure of lags in the Indian economy? Kumar perhaps does not consider the question to be important. But why? The question of exogeneity or endogeneity of the money supply is also not important to Kumar. But we know these are crucial theoretical as well as practical issues. Whether monetary policy could be made effective in a complex financial structure as a cure for inflation is a question which can only be adequately answered

on a resolution of these important issues.

#### POLITICAL SLOGAN

Kumar advocates an "Integrated Monetary Policy". As a political slogan it sounds well. But when we come to the formulation of the operative content of such an integrated policy we encounter almost insurmountable difficulties. The structural question becomes predominant, and the political will and capabilities of the government play a crucial role. The history of our monetary policy during the Plan period is not encouraging enough. Our government's contradictory economic policies have turned the accepted doctrine of "controlled expansion of money supply" into an empty expression. It may be seriously asked whether monetary policy has any but a minor marginal role to play in the current Indian situation. The situation no doubt requires continuous control over monetary demand, but an equitable distribution of available supplies is also required. In practice, however our politics makes the pursuit of such objectives almost impossible. Fiscal and monetary policy measures are not made to tally with the supply management measures. The government's pricing policies in the form of farm price supports or administered prices for public sector products and services often run contrary to and defeat its price control measures. It is a clear example of going one step forward and then retreating by two steps backward.

Quite understandably, the Reserve Bank feels powerless to provide through its monetary policies the necessary countervailing force against the inflationary pressures

generated by the government's complex economic policies. The Bank's liquidity and cash reserve ratios, partial neutralization of incremental deposits and such other devices seem to be of only peripheral importance in controlling inflation. There is also the factor of black money, largely the creation of the government's own price control, taxation and expenditure policies, which is altogether beyond the discipline of both the government and the Bank. The Indian economic scenario is indeed complex and is not responsive to any specific measure. In such a context one may like to adopt the Radcliffe view of monetary policy.

Monetary policy might properly perform two functions: a background function and an emergency function. The background function is to try to hold long-term interest rates at the level which would maintain approximate balance between saving and investment in the economy. For emergency situations, i.e., situations of severe inflation or deflation, a package containing both monetary and fiscal measures would be appropriate. The obvious policy would be a combination of controls on capital issues, bank advances and consumer credit, etc.. Other direct measures may also have to be adopted to meet specific situations. This, of course, is a very eclectic view. But in a situation, as faced by us, an eclectic approach is the only viable approach. Quite often, in practice, expediency triumphs over principles. Can we really avoid ad hocism in our country?

*H. N. Roy is Professor of Economics at the University of Calcutta.*



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# Indian Book Chronicle

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## An Important Contribution

Surjit Mansingh has made a major contribution to the study of Indian foreign policy by providing a comprehensive analysis of an important phase of India's interaction with the international system. She has handled the subject, which is becoming increasingly complex, with good grasp and great sensitivity. Being an Indian settled abroad, she has given us an account which exhibits fairly good understanding of India's aspirations, and yet does not allow objectivity to be jeopardized.

### POWER OR SURVIVAL

There are, however, a few questions about Mansingh's basic hypothesis which may be raised at the outset. Mansingh portrays Mrs. Gandhi's foreign policy as a search for power, and dwells at length (p. 18-25) at the relationship between Indira Gandhi's personality and India's foreign policy behaviour. The first question that arises is whether India's foreign policy behaviour during Mrs. Gandhi's rule was a search for power or a struggle for survival. Is it not too early to start speaking in terms of India seeking power when in fact India's international environment is full of challenges to India's security and development, and India is waging a battle for survival?

The second question that arises is whether or not there is a direct relationship between Indira Gandhi's personality & India's foreign policy behaviour? To me, the relationship as discussed in the book is over stretched and somewhat contrived. Under any other leader India would have reacted more or less the same way to the country's external environment. This was proved during the Janata rule. Differences in style can always be discerned from leader to leader, but the basic policy frame would be the same.

According to Mansingh, recognition of power as a crucial determinant of international relations was Indira Gandhi's main contribution to foreign policy (p. 32). Would it, therefore, be true to say that Nehru did not recognize power as a crucial determinant? Would it also mean that Indira Gandhi emphasized power to the exclusion of ethical norms in international relations? Neither of

**Surjit Mansingh, India's Search for Power: Indira Gandhi's Foreign Policy, 1966-1982 pp. 405, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1984**

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Telephone: 660738



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these would be true. The truth seems to lie somewhere in between.

Mansingh has made quite a perceptive observation in stating that there was a gap between India's power and capability, arising from India's inability to increase its manoeuvrability of action in proportion to its increased strength. She has also well brought out the fundamental dilemma of power facing India: "Was India a small power to be treated as a pawn in international politics because of its low per capita income? Was India a middle power by virtue of its size, capacity, and the middle position it occupied between competing blocs? Was India a regional power because of its strategic location and historic position in Southern Asia? Or, was India an emergent great power in aspiration and, perhaps, in fact? (p. 39).

Some of Mansingh's observations on the foreign policy making structures and processes are very interesting and valid. She is right in stating that the Ministry of External Affairs has failed to develop a worthwhile mechanism to coordinate policy making with other ministries and departments of the government which are relevant to foreign affairs (p. 44-45). It is, however, not correct to say that the main hurdle to the development of foreign policy planning in the Indian government was the lack of coordination, or the absence of a national security framework for decision making at the highest level (p. 48). These were the effects rather than the cause. The cause was the absence of will to allow an institutionalized planning mechanism to develop, which would tend to supersede the dictates of Secretaries in charge of major territorial and functional divisions.

"India and the United States" is one of the two best chapters of the book, the other being "Indira's Economic Diplomacy". India's relations with the United States have been examined in great depth. Some of the interesting points made are the following. The two potential sources of influence and support within American society always ignored by Indian Ambassadors were the growing community of Indian immigrants, and the powerful American press. A proposal for a long range military understanding between India and the United States in the early sixties was thwarted by Nehru's death, the Indo-Pak war, and unacceptable conditions imposed by U.S.A. Dean Rusk and W. W. Rostow, two of Johnson's most trusted advisors, were of the view that lack of cultural harmony and historical association between India and United States was unconducive to the development of mutual trust or common interest, so necessary for a successful relationship. India claimed a special treatment for itself, neither client, nor ally, nor enemy, but unique. The US policies in South Asia were aimed at containing not Soviet Union but India.

### THREE FACETS

Mansingh has discussed at length three important facets of Indo-US relations: i) differences in strategic perceptions; ii) differences on the nuclear question; and iii) the economic link. She has also

discussed the subject of the US tilt in 1971, and has effectively brought out the fact that India's decision not to extend the war to west Pakistan was its own, not taken at the instance of USSR which, as Henry Kissinger believed, was acting under US pressure. A useful contribution of Mansingh, because of her access to Johnson papers, is the discussion of US response to the Indian food crisis of 1965-66, including Johnson's pressure tactics and humiliating policies leading to Indian endeavours for food self-sufficiency.

In the study of India's relations with the Soviet Union, Mansingh refers to three major areas of divergence in approach of the two countries, which of course were obscured by their conscious emphasis on the positive elements in their relations. The three areas were the question of collective security in Asia, attitude towards Vietnam, and the question of Indian Ocean. The Afghanistan question was a major divergence too, but the Indo-Soviet link built on convergences survived the strain.

The Soviet economic aid to India made a four fold contribution: first, it bolstered India's self-esteem; second it projected an image of aid without strings; third, the Soviet Union entered into long term, five year, comprehensive commitments without fear of legislative interference in the appropriations procedure every year and fourth, Soviet aid went exclusively to the public sector. Mansingh comes to a somewhat significant conclusion, by agreeing with a remark made by William Barnes: "If we look at the larger



picture in terms of Moscow's influence on the direction of India's foreign policy, it is difficult to see the Soviet hand behind New Delhi's position on any basic issue."

Mansingh's chapter on India's relations with Pakistan and China has nothing new to offer. It has no framework of analysis which would justify the clubbing of Pakistan and China in one chapter. The chapter on India's relations with smaller neighbours, however, is a refreshing study, made in the context of various possible models of such relationship in the past, and

the extent to which they provide any guidance for future. The last chapter, on Economic Diplomacy, is again an excellent analysis of India's economic goals in the international system, and various strategies of pursuing them.

A major gap in this otherwise very comprehensive and competent study of India's foreign policy is India's attitude towards the Third World, which comes through off and on, but needed a separate examination too.

Satish Kumar is Professor of Diplomacy at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

## The Fabular Imagination

Vasant A. Shahane

*Prajapati: God of the People*

pp. 247, Arnold-Heinemann, 1984, Rs. 50.00.

Reviewed by M.K. Naik

As the examples of *A Hundred Years of Solitude*, *The World According to Garp* and *Midnight's Children* show, recent fiction is increasingly moving towards a form in which there is a strong fabular element. *Prajapati: God of the People* is also a novel in which there is a concerted attempt to endow a largely realistic narrative of modern Indian life with a distinct fabular dimension.

### FOUR YOUNGMEN

*Prajapati* is a story of four young men who are classmates in the college and are close friends. As the novelist himself tells us, "by a curious coincidence, they also represented the four castes of traditional, orthodox Hindu so-

ciety", and it is clear that their names too carry obvious allegorical overtones. The intellectual leader of the group is Achal Bindu (Madhav), whose name literally means 'still point.' He is a *Konkani* Brahmin and an enlightened and introspective person. Next comes Himmat Singh Rawal, a true-blue Rajput—a representative of the *Kshatriya* caste (Himmat = Courage). The third—i.e. 'Vai-shya' caste is represented by Hikmatlal Kanhayyalal Ludda, and his name overtly alludes to the shrewdness ('hikmat') of the *Bania* and the merchant's proverbial rotund tummy ('Ludda' = *Laddu*). And the allusive resonances in the name of the fourth friend—who, of course, belongs to the *Sudra* caste—are even more

vibrant Bhimrao Honaji Nagwe is very appropriately named, since 'Bhimrao' suggests Dr. B. (Bhimrao) R. Ambedkar, the greatest scheduled caste leader of modern India; 'Honaji' reminds one of Honaji Bala, the well-known Maharashtrian poet who also hailed from the *Sudra* caste and his last name 'Nagw', which literally means 'the naked one' evidently refers to his underprivileged status as the 'unaccommodated man.'

The narrative opens with the four friends about to part at the conclusion of their educational career and what they do now again stresses the fabular element in the novel: they take a solemn vow, much in the spirit of similar friends in ancient Sanskrit narratives like *Pancatantra* or *Dasa-kumaracarita*, that in future 'if a crisis arises in the life of any one of us...the remaining three members shall at once rush to his rescue under any circumstances.' Given the traditional Hindu caste structure, the first friend to face a crisis is predictably Bhimrao Honaji Nagwe. The crisis in his life is that his illegitimate son (who is not aware of his parentage) murders his putative father—a confirmed drunkard and stands in danger of being sent to the gallows. The other three friends immediately arrive when summoned and appropriately enough, it is Hikmatlal, the shrewd businessman who saves the situation with suitable bribes in the right quarters.

### COMPLICATIONS

But it is Hikmatlal himself whose turn comes next. His prob-



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lem is that his son wishes to marry a girl who is actually the illegitimate daughter of Hikmatlal himself. Then the mother of this illegitimate daughter arrives on the scene, reveals everything and thus prevents the tragedy. Hikmat's dilemma is presented next. His twice-widowed young daughter wants to marry a scheduled caste youth—a notion which the high-born Rajput father first finds absolutely shocking; but he relents at the end, with Achal playing the mediator's role effectively. Finally, to the surprise of his friends, Achal, whom they look up to as a tower of strength, himself faces an existential crisis when his wife dies and a sense of 'hollowness... utter vacancy.... inability to make connection' fills his mind.

None of his friends can help him in this crisis, which is resolved when Achal recovers his faith in life after he has seen old Bhauraje's ecstatic devotion to God ending in death during a Ganesha festival procession. In the last scene, Achal, whose spiritual recovery is now complete, takes an idol of Prajapati to a mountain in Kashmir and here after he has a vision of Prajapati himself against the background of the snow-covered landscape, his handing over of the idol to his young son becomes a kind of a symbolic gesture of passing on the torch of recovered faith to the younger generation.

## CENTRAL SYMBOL

Prajapati constitutes the central symbol in this fable and he stands for the creator, transforming chaos into order. In contrast with him,

the modern political 'prajapatis' are "engaged in creating chaos," as Achal points out, while Hikmat believes that 'today's Prajapati... is essentially a god of money.' Nevertheless, as Achal tells us in the final scene, the real Prajapati is still there and that he 'would recreate order out of chaos.... Things will not fall apart.' While this central symbol is certainly very promising, it is a moot point whether the novelist has succeeded in exploiting its fullest potential. Of the two kinds of Prajapatis—true and false—it is the fake article to which the narrative appears to do some justice in its pictures of the corrupt judge—Rama-shastri Prajapati, the mercenary man of God—Muktibodh Maharaj, and the wily bania—Hikmatlal himself.

But one can hardly say the same regarding the 'true' Prajapati. It is of course, an age-old problem of all fiction viz., that it is always easier to paint a bad man than a good one. But the chief difficulty here seems to be that Achal's all too swift conversion in the end does not appear to be adequately motivated. This is probably because Bhauraje, whose sudden death during the Ganesh festival procession brings about this transformation, remains only a name. Had this been not the case, the final scene on the Kashmir maintain could have emerged as a powerful symbolic finale.

## FABULAR INTENTIONS

A fabular narrative succeeds best when it is solidly anchored in some kind of reality, but in *Prajapati*, the author's fabular

intentions often clash with the harsh imperatives of things they are. For instance, he would have us believe that Bhimrao Nagwe, who is a minister, rushes not once, but *thrice* to help a college class-mate, whereas his counterpart in India, that is Bhimrat, today is far more likely to put into practice Henry Adam's adage—'a friend in power is a friend lost.' Again, it is equally surprising that Bhimrao, who moves heaven and earth to save young Parashu from death in a murder because the young man is his illegitimate son, should have kept Parashu totally in the dark about his real parentage these years. And how, on earth could Shailendra have married another woman 'under the Civil Marriage Act' (p. 130), when his first wife is very much alive and there has been no divorce separation?

The central motif of the compact between four young friends and its subsequent outcome has naturally made for a well-ordered structure and *Prajapati* is quite tidily constructed, though at the beginning of chapter the narrative drags a little while more than twenty pages are devoted to the portrayal of the happy married life of Parashu's mother. It is also possible to suggest that far too many things are crammed into Achal's long reverie in the final chapter so that the total effect is somewhat blurred. The style of the novel constantly reminds us that the author is a professor of English. Literary references crop up on every other page with even the banal Hikmatlal quoting (correctly)



from the 'Ode to the West Wind' on page 179. Unfortunately quite a few awkward expressions have crept in, like the following: 'this violent quarrel and the one-sided attack between...' (p. 12) and 'he enjoyed himself talking to.....' (p. 182). It is also sad to note that the proof-reading is extremely poor, with a 'cup of tea' becoming a 'cuk' and 'Ganesha' being transformed into 'Sanesha' (p. 226).

*Prajapati* is a first novel and though sixty is a rather late age to embark upon a novelistic career, Shahane has certainly shown in this book ample evidence of an active fabular imagination and a flair for narrative strategy which should make his subsequent efforts in this direction well worth watching.

M.K. Naik is Professor of English at Karnataka University, Dharwar

## Useful Contribution

K.B. Lall, Wolfgang Ernest U, R.S. Chopra (Editors).

*The E.E.C. in the Global System*

pp. xxiii+273, *Allied*, 1984 Rs. 100.00.

Reviewed by S.Y. Govindarajan

This book contains 19 papers out of the 34 presented at a Jawaharlal Nehru University—European Economic Community joint seminar held in Delhi in November, 1980.

EEC and India have vital links with each other and "The European Community (its ten members taken together) is India's Economic Partner No. 1" as Wilhelm Haferkamp the Vice-President of the European Communities remarks in his foreward. Hence any good book on EEC should evoke interest in any educated Indian.

### TRANS-NATIONAL SYSTEM

The introduction by the three editors indicates the pace and quality of the papers that follow. The EEC has been analysed historically as a successful attempt

in realising European unity for economic cooperation and development and its story depicted in all important aspects indicating the prospects for the eighties. It is a disinterested and knowledgeable account that emerges as the introduction. The editors are confident that notwithstanding the stresses and strains resulting from its structural/functional handicaps, the EC (European community) is consolidating itself slowly and steadily into a durable trans-national system, with a potential for promoting peace and progress at the global level. This is indeed a very rich tribute to an organisation which started unsteadily, was shaken often and finally come to stay despite the problems it had to face and still has to face.

Space is a handicap to me. Otherwise, I would have given

a detailed review of each of the nineteen papers. If all of them are by the same author, even a briefer account and estimate can do justice to the author. But, to do justice to nineteen authors writing nineteen papers is impossible in a review primarily because of the limitations of space.

H.S. Chopra's is the fast paper. It examines the European community's efforts in Regional Development Co-operation. An associate professor of West European Studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University, he is also one of the editors of this volume. He has done full justice to the topic and has vindicated his professional ability and knowledge as a specialist on West Europe. The paper is as instructive as it is interesting. I shall quote only two or three small passages. "Perhaps it is also justifiable to view it as representing a kind of trade-unionism in international politics, for the member-states of the community form a distinct class with a specific orientation to the realization of the goals of political power"..... "Secondly, on the surface, the European Community appears to be an economic community. Primarily in the intra-community frame it may well be so, but in relation to other regions/countries, its major powers are among the principal suppliers of arms to sensitive regions. Perhaps for this reason, it occupies a crucial place in the strategic world power system"..... "Thirdly, the Community interacts organically with fifty nine developing countries in the Third World. In that capacity, it uses economic diplomacy to derive political dividends."



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## INDIAN INITIAL EXPERIENCE

Luigi Boseu's paper on "The EEC Contribution to Development in South Asia" brings out clearly that EEC and South Asia co-operate with each other in trading and it was India's initial happy experience that induced others, like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, (South-Asia countries) to rely on EEC and its schemes.

Eberhard Rhein in his "Intra-community Politics of European Integration" discusses the way in which European integration advances. The key role in advancing integration is played by the governments and bureaucrats. Fundamentally each government defends its own national interests. The European Community Council is in the first instance a bargaining place where the ten Governments try to maximise their advantages from the Community inter-play. Rhein's second paper on The Implications for Developing Countries of the Second Enlargement of the EEC is also educative, one which assesses the likely effects of the second enlargement of the EEC on three groups of developing countries:

- (1) The countries of the Southern Mediterranean.
- (2) The African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.
- (3) The developing countries of Asia and Latin America.

The conclusion is that after the second enlargement, the possibility of increased pressure on all

developing countries—including Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco—and the ACP countries to accept further restraints on their exports. Genevieve Chedeville's paper traces the Evolution of EEC policy towards Development Co-operation with particular reference to more balanced relationships with the third world countries. K.K. Bhargava in his paper explains his view of the EEC's New Techniques of Diplomacy. The principal dimensions of diplomacy of the EEC are economic, political and above all human. A major approach of EEC is to establish economic relations with countries and regions which are important for strategic approach to international relations.

## SIGNAL CONTRIBUTION

The author admits that EEC has made a signal contribution to the strengthening of the international capacity for managing world economic problems in a pragmatic manner and within a strategic frame-work. He, however, ends his paper with a cautionary note hoping that "the techniques employed by the EEC lead to transparent results and do not create discriminatory and inequitable situations".

The paper on the "European Community and Human Rights" by M.K. Olivi, the one on "Energy Policy of the European Community" by Subrata Sen Gupta, "EEC and the Energy Crisis" by Hans Michaelis are informative and give due credit to the EEC for its useful work in these fields. Olivi's second paper is on the "Evaluation of the EEC's Role

vis-a-vis Different Regions." It has some portions common in theme with the earlier papers by Chopra (the first one) and that by Chedeville but it is no reproduction of either in any respect.

Madhavan has contributed an interesting and a brief objective paper on "European political co-operation vis-a-vis Some Crisis Situations in Asia." There are four papers in the EEC and its economic relations with various countries. One covers Japan and U.S., another China and Japan and the third the ASEAN countries. The fourth deals with "The Euro-Arab Dialogue". All of them are well-written and contain useful information. The rest of the papers are also good. One of them is on the Lome conventions, another on the problems of the European Community. Yet another deals with Pluralism of the North South System. The last one deals with FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) and the third world.

As I had mentioned earlier, space is a constraint. Otherwise, I would have written about each paper at least a few lines. On the whole, this book is a very good one and throws a lot of light on EEC. The general reader would get the satisfaction of having read a very good informative and scholarly book on EEC. Students of International Relations will find it a treat.

S.Y. Govindarajan a member of the I.A.A.S. is currently posted at Hyderabad.



## An Assortment

K. Natwar Singh

*Curtain Raisers*—Essays, Reviews.

pp. 327, Vikas, Price not mentioned

Reviewed by Samuel Mathai

A curtain raiser is, properly, a short play, usually of one scene with few characters, used to open a performance; a curtain raiser is followed by a full-length play. It is also used in the sense of a short and unimportant preliminary to a main or significant event or work. Natwar Singh has titled his latest book *Curtain Raisers*. Perhaps he intends to convey the impression that this book is not to be taken too seriously and that he has more important literary matter up his sleeve. It is not clear why he has used the plural form of the expression. The book is divided into three parts—Essays, Reviews, and Letters. Perhaps this book is meant to be a promise of more essays, and reviews, and letters.

Whatever the author's intention may have been in naming the book *Curtain Raisers*, he certainly does not seem to want the matter in it to be treated as trivial or unimportant. He has collected these occasional essays and book-reviews and letters he has received from some persons he considers important, and published them, because he considers them to be of some value and worth preserving. The letters are not his own writing: he has not included in the collection a single letter of his own, so that often we do not know the context of the letters he has printed. Hardly any of these letters has any literary merit; nor

do they deal with any matters of moment. They are of value only to Natwar Singh.

The book book-reviews are more interesting than the letters. This section of the book begins with a piece called "Reading for Pleasure." It was written for the *The Illustrated Weekly* in 1977, presumably at the request of the editor of that paper. Natwar Singh briefly refers to some half a dozen books that he had been reading and tells us something about his interest in books. Apart from this first piece this section of *Curtain Raisers* has forty reviews, some of them reviews of single books and the others reviews of groups of books. These reviews show the wide range of Natwar Singh's interest in books. But the books that most of us review are sent to us by the editors of the journals in which the reviews are to appear, or sometimes by the publishers of the books. So the books reviewed by Natwar-Singh may not have been chosen by him. Nevertheless the reviews indicate the reviewer's taste and his critical judgement. Natwar Singh's reviews are competent and show a capacity for appreciation and discernment.

But by the very nature of the task these reviews, published in newspapers mostly, are not great examples of "creative criticism". A review can become a piece of creative writing only when the

book reviewed has a great theme and the reviewer has the freedom to develop the theme further, and, as it were, write, a new essay on the subject. The reviews in *Curtain Raisers* were not intended to be anything more than "notices" of new books.

Perhaps the most interesting section of the book is Part One, called Essays. Many of these essays deal with themes and personalities connected with international political activity and with literature. Natwar Singh himself is a member of the Indian Foreign Service and had wide contact with the diplomatic world in India and abroad. He writes with understanding and admiration of Gandhi, Nehru, Rajaji, Nelson Mandela; he also writes on 'Non-Alignment', the 'Commonwealth' and related matters with some authority. But some of the other essays on literature and on certain personalities are less satisfactory: he is not on very sure ground here, and some of the essays give the impression that his main purpose is to show that he knew some writers and other persons whom he considers distinguished.

These "Essays" are not all in fact essays in the proper sense of the word; they are of unequal quality and vary in length from a few lines to several pages. Natwar Singh would have done better if he had omitted some of these from this collection.

Natwar Singh is a well-read person, and his wide experience in international affairs should enable him to see deeply into the springs of human behaviour. *Curtain Raisers* gives us some glimpses of what he is capable of doing. It is unfortunate that he has



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included in it so much trivial matter and indulges in what looks like 'name—dropping'. We must hope that this book will indeed be a curtain raiser and be followed by more substantial writing. Perhaps when Natwar Singh retires from his employment in the diplomatic service he will be

volume able to devote all his time to scholarly or imaginative writing. If he does this we can surely expect from his pen some books of great distinction.

*Sammuel Mathai was Vice-Chancellor of Kerala University in the sixties and now lives in retirement at Trivandurum..*

## Alternate Current

Ranajit Guha (Editor)

*Subaltern Studies II: Writings on South Asian History & Society*  
pp. xi+358, OUP, 1983, Rs. 125.00.

Reviewed by S. Bhattacharya

It is difficult to review a collection of essays by several authors. It is more so if it happens to be part of a cumulative series. Each of the contributions may merit an extended review. But an element of arbitrariness intervenes in the form of the reviewer's preference of some problems over other ones. This review will be no exception.

However, to mitigate this arbitrariness, very slightly, let us take a quick look at the contributions as a composite whole. These excellent essays cover a very wide range of subjects. The main thrust seems to be in the direction of the examination and reconstitution of historical knowledge. Four of the essays reflect this concern more than the others. The first, by Ranjit Guha, is a historiographical essay on insurgency as an object of study. Another, by Partha Chatterjee, is an extension of some of the conceptual questions on the modes of power and forms of State organisation in agrarian societies, discussed in his earlier essay in the

of this series. Dipesh Chakrabarty's piece is concerned with the "Conditions for knowledge of working-class conditions."

Some allied questions are also in the forefront in the essay by Gyan Pande on the protection movement and sectarian strife in the Bhojpur region. These last two essays have a more empirical orientation. That is also true of the essays by Gautam Bhadra (On Frontier uprisings in Mughal India) and Stephen Henningham (on the Quit India movement in Bihar and U.P.). Finally, there are two economists who focus on the contemporary agrarian scene, Nirmal Chandra (a report on field investigations in Burdwan, West Bengal, in 1974) and Arvind Das ('Agrarian Changes from Above and from Below: Bihar 1947-78').

### UNITY OF THEME?

Insofar as the volume as a whole has any unity, it is in terms of the subject of enquiry rather than a paradigmatic unity. The editor's preface states that

"with all this variety these writings are held together by a common emphasis on the primacy of the subaltern as the subject of historical and sociological enquiry". (p. vii) In fact, the concept 'subaltern' is explicitly used in these pages only by Ranajit Guha and Henningham. Guha is careful to underline the variety of approach represented in this volume and relinquishes any claim "to set up another little sect of seers with access to the ultimate truth". It is good to see that. (There follows the usual exhortations against 'elitism' and all that, carried over from volume one,—perhaps an unnecessary bit of flag-waving on the part of someone who has so much more worthwhile things to say.)

The first essay by Ranajit Guha provides the key-note and perhaps I shall be forgiven if I concentrate on that in this review. In this piece he investigates the reasons why in the entire corpus of historical writings on peasant insurgency in colonial India the consciousness of the insurgent has received little attention. He analyses three types of discourse: "primary, secondary and tertiary according to the order of their filiation. Each of these is differentiated from the other two by the degree of its formal and/or acknowledged (as opposed to real and/or tacit) identification with an official point of view, by the measure of its distance from the event to which it refers, and by the ratio of the distributive and integrative components in its narrative". (p. 3) The analysis of the primary discourse (pp. 3-15) is particularly illuminating both in terms of method and the sub-



stantive points made. The major part of Guha's essay is concerned with this analysis. Towards the end Guha launches into an analysis of what he calls tertiary, radical historiography.

### CONFRONTING HISTORY

The task of confronting history with itself, as Habermas has put it, is not an easy one. In this essay Ranajit Guha's aim is essentially that. There remain, however, some problems in the inner structure of this critique. A more careful reader than the present reviewer may perhaps puzzle them out for himself. Take for instance Guha's argument that the so-called "tertiary discourse, even of the radical variety" is "still trapped in the paradigm which inspired the ideologically contrary, because colonialist, discourse of the primary and secondary types". (p. 38) Where do the "radical historians" (Guha cites L. Natrajan, Abdulla Rasul and Suprakash Ray) go wrong? Instead of "explaining and describing the consciousness specific to the rebellion", they tend to "ascribe to it a transcendental consciousness". (p. 38) This is because it is suggested, "the real subject" of the radical historian is "an abstraction called Worker-and-Peasant, an ideal rather than the real historical personality of the insurgent". (p. 33) And why do they do such a silly thing? They do so because, Guha suggests, they are rearranging history along the axis of "a protracted campaign for freedom and socialism" (p. 33) in order to appropriate the history of insurgency as their heritage. (p. 39) These poor radi-

cals' mental furniture are those handed down from the people on the first and second floors (primary and secondary discourse) and they are so busy rearranging them that they do not play attention to the damage they are doing: the "distortion" that is caused by their interpretation along class lines. (Look, for instance, at what they have done to the religiosity of the people, pp. 34-38).

### RADICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

Guha may be quite right in saying that "the specificity of re-

bel consciousness had eluded radical historiography". (p. 39) However, he goes further: "In this ahistorical view of the history of insurgency all moments of consciousness are assimilated to the ultimate and higher moment of the series—indeed to an Ideal Consciousness. A historiography devoted to its pursuit (even when that is done, regrettably, in the name of Marxism) is ill-equipped to cope with contradictions which are indeed the stuff history is made of". This is a rather fundamental philosophical statement and it raises expectations of a cri-

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tique of radical historiography on a scale that matches with it. But what we get falls short of that.

It boils down to this that two or three authors reviewed by Guha either do not pay enough attention to religiosity in the consciousness of the Santal rebels, or that these authors explain it away as tricks played on the gullible followers by the leaders. This point is argued forcefully. (pp. 34-38) But is that all there is to it? The reader is given some hints about the failure of radical historiography to comprehend "Many other contradictions". (p. 39) These are mentioned in precisely three sentences (p. 40): "betrayal" as opposed to an ideal solidarity, "localism and territoriality" as opposed to the notion of a generalized movement, and "authorities within the promordial relations of a rural community" as opposed to elite authority.

These seem to be rather obvious things to overlook and if such errors have been made by historians (not cited here), radical or otherwise, this warning has its uses. On the whole the criticism of 'radical historiography' leaves one dissatisfied, for the slender evidence does not bear the weight of the very general statements in criticism of the radical tradition. Fretting about it in a cursory fashion will not fell the tree.

#### ABSTRACTION

Finally, the problem is that, to put it at the simplest level, if the 'radical' historians went wrong in talking about "an abstraction called Workers-and-Peasants", is the "rebel" or the "insurgent personality" any less

of an abstraction? When Guha talks of "rebel consciousness" or the consciousness of "the rural masses" (p. 2) does he posit a collective consciousness which is generally different from that attributed to classes in the 'radical' tradition? It possibly belongs to the same family, though it may be a smarter cousin with a sharper ear for dissonances and ambiguities and what have you—things which may escape the worker-and-peasant brigade who operate on a different level of specificity.

It is possible to argue that the difference is a matter of differing levels of aggregation and the employment of one conceptual tool rather than the other depends on the strategic choices in respect of

the task of analysis to be undertaken. Finally, there seems to be (my conjecture is open to correction) an assumption that specification will enable the historian to break away from the teleology inherent in the simplistic historiography which Guha criticises. (i.e. teleology in the approach to history as "a protracted campaign for freedom and socialism", p. 33.) This is perhaps an incorrect assumption. Chances are that the orthodox teleology of the macro order will be replaced by merely a more fractionalized teleology in micro studies. Then we are back to square one.

*S. Bhattacharya is Professor of History at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.*

## Useful

**Stephen Henningham**

**Peasant Movements in Colonial India, North Bihar 1917-1942**

pp. xiii+286, Australian National University Monograph No. 9, available from OUP, 1982, Rs. 45.00.

**Reviewed by Vinita Damodran**

Stephen Henningham's work *Peasant Movements in Colonial India, North Bihar 1917-1942* is a survey of six mass movements in North Bihar from 1917 to 1942. The work tries to examine the interaction between nationalist agitation and agrarian protest in North Bihar to explain why rural discontent failed to achieve radical expression. The work, however, suffers by being too thin in parts and one wishes that such themes as the texture of social differentiation and the process of peasant participation and political mobilisation had been tackled

more effectively. While his conclusions are consistent with the widely held view that the Congress rural base in Bihar came from small landlords and rich peasants, the participation of low caste poor peasants in the peasant movements in the period needs to be discussed more thoroughly. For example, in analysing Vidyanad's movement of 1920 he comments that poor peasants participated as they depended on the rich peasants for leadership. It would be interesting if he could trace the ties of these sections with the village elite as Hardi-



man has done for Kheda.

The logic of poor peasant mobilisation for the 1942 Quit India movement, he analyses rather differently. He sees two parallel insurgencies in the movement. One was of the elite, the upper caste rich peasants and small landlords led by the Congress intelligentsia which was primarily a national protest, while the other of the lower caste poor peasants, was a movement motivated mainly by economic deprivation. The suggestion that the second movement was relatively independent of the first, was more violent and was largely a poor peasant low caste affair seems rather untenable. Some of the evidence cited does not support this interpretation. For instance, one report reveals that both Bhumi-hars and poor labourers participated in the looting and in the violence equally. Only a more indepth study of the popular consciousness of the period will prove whether the two insurgencies were as distinct as he suggests.

An other phase, where one feels that his evidence is rather insubstantial to prove his conclusion is his study of the Kisan Sabha movement 1936-39, where he concludes that the movement was limited both in area and the number of people affected. However, some of the evidence cited does not wholly support this interpretation, especially the reports quoted which outline the deteriorating agrarian situation and state conclusively that attempts to seize Bakasht land had come in from nearly every district in Bihar.

Despite these comments, however, the work does give us a broad understanding of the nature of popular movements in Bihar and is an important addition to the existing literature of

the region on a period which has hardly been worked upon.

*Vinita Damodran is a research student in the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.*

## Letter

Sir,

Among the contributors to your annual number, all those representing Indian publishing will, I hope, get together and find some way of reviving your proposal made to the U.G.C. that college and university libraries should be obliged to pay for their purchase of library books within 45 days.

Even this period is too long when we consider that the reason for which booksellers need a credit period does not apply to libraries receiving U.G.C. grants. Booksellers operate their essentially 'intermediary' business by virtue of the credit (i.e. buy now and pay later) and the discount (i.e. buy at less but sell at full price) extended to them by publishers. These two capital, which in turn makes it possible for a large number of booksellers to enter the business. This, traditionally, has been a satisfactory arrangement between publishers and booksellers.

For some reason (and I don't know when it began) the same facilities are enjoyed by libraries. This is strange because libraries do not invest (hence have no need for credit) nor do they earn the money which keeps them going (hence have no right to any discount). By encroaching

upon the bookseller's privileges, the library weakens the book trade which then cannot give adequate support to the publisher of books aimed at the library market.

Another pernicious privilege enjoyed by libraries is that of obtaining books 'on approval'. In our country this takes the form of the bookseller (or the publisher) having to deliver such books to a library without any assurance that the books will be purchased. As an expert purchaser, a library ought to know in advance what books it wants to purchase. Why should it spend somebody else's time on 'approving', when it cannot even pay (like normal customers do), immediately for what it will purchase?

Until the library has paid the bookseller, the bookseller cannot pay the publisher who, meanwhile, has had to pay off the paper-supplier and the printer and the binder. The only relief the publisher enjoys is that he does not have to pay the author a royalty the very next day or even 45 days after a copy of the book is 'sold'.

Yours sincerely,  
Surjit Mukherjee

Secunderabad





Company Meeting: Hindustan Lever Limited

# DEVELOPING PEOPLE

**Speech delivered by  
Dr. A.S. Ganguly,  
Chairman,  
Hindustan Lever Limited,  
at the Annual  
General Meeting  
held at Bombay on  
Monday, 25th June, 1984.**

In Hindustan Lever, developing people has the same priority as other major business activities, namely growth, profitability, and innovation and diversification. The development of people and the business are so closely linked that what the company is today is wholly due to the efforts and contribution of its employees over the last several decades. This growth and progress, however, could never have been achieved without a deep understanding and appreciation of the changing environment and preparing people to function under these circumstances.

Let's take a look at the environment, especially the country's economic performance. Among the bright spots, we have our spectacular success in boosting farm output. We have also done well in mobilising resources for capital investment and taking education and health services to the masses. On the other hand, in the industrial sphere, the public sector's performance has come under sharper focus and the private sector's achievements are also under pressure in the face of increasing competition. Lack of modernisation, poor productivity and trade union intransigence have all led to rising incidence of industrial sickness. This mixed balance sheet of the state of the economy has had an impact on corporate thinking.

## ENVIRONMENT AND CHANGE

The environmental realities have influenced our own business and the manner in which we induct and develop people in the company. Increasing attention is being devoted to training of personnel at different levels and various locations. This includes operators on the shop floor, supervisors and also those engaged in selling and distribution. Even traditional clerical and administrative roles are undergoing change in the face of competitiveness and the need to be cost-effective.

Although this speech is devoted to the changing needs of training and develop-

ment of business managers, it is equally relevant to the needs of all those who work in different parts of our business. It is so because certain environmental factors—which have a bearing on all endeavours in our country—have greatly enhanced the importance of human resource development. For example, issues like "Modernising Technology" and "Growing Rural Markets" are relevant factors in making the best possible use of our human resources. But since they have been dealt with in my earlier AGM speeches, I would like to highlight here some other key environmental issues:

### 1. The Indian Manager

Traditionally Indians have been successful traders, seafarers and craftsmen. With the progressive induction of manufacturing technology as well as the growth of the service sector, a different set of skills and knowledge became necessary. The modern Indian professional manager is primarily a product of developments since World War II. The process began with the induction of Indians as managers in foreign-owned companies and the training and induction of the upcoming generation in the rapidly growing family-owned enterprises.

Since the management of modern industry had limited historical experience in this country, in the initial period, inherited styles and practices continued. Soon there was a search for models from outside which could be suitably adapted to meet the country's increasingly complex needs. Management educationists, corporate leaders, as well as policy framers first looked at famous American institutions such as Harvard, Sloan, Stanford, Chicago, North Western, and so on. Lately they have shifted their gaze to the legendary Japanese model. All through this period there was a rapid growth of new institutions such as the IITs and IIMs to cater to the needs of private as well as the newly emerging public sector corporations. Off and on, there was a muted debate on the evaluation of the model of the Indian family-run business. There are famous Indian businesses, such as the House of Tatas, Birlas and several others with exceptional track records who have successfully blended professionalism with tradition. However, this cannot be said about the majority of other businesses. It is a pity that little time and effort have been devoted to understanding the difference between these two systems of management. Perhaps in looking for inspiration from outside the country, we have overlooked our own basic strengths. The core management philosophy in each country is primarily a product of its culture, tradition and social goals, which are judiciously

blended into a progressive educational and training system. There is no evidence to suggest that we have begun to think in these terms in our country.

### 2. Industrial Development

A realistic assessment of economic and industrial progress in our country presents a picture of enormous activity, great achievements and a high degree of self-reliance. It also reveals a number of lost opportunities, disparities in development and unfulfilled dreams. While taking pride in our achievements we need to reflect on our failures since they have been responsible for retarding growth and development.

As a country we boast of having the third largest number of scientists and engineers in the world, or of being the tenth largest in terms of industrial output. But in qualitative as well as per capita terms, these statistics lose much of their significance. In spite of industrial growth, we are being left behind by several other countries in the South. It can be argued that some of these countries have adopted a more short-term and externally over-dependent model or that they have social pressures which are more easily manageable. Nevertheless, we have ourselves begun realising that our growth and development have not only to be more rapid but also more evenly spread than it has been in the past.

In our pursuit of an important objective — import substitution — we had adopted a model of self-reliance which, while achieving a degree of success, did not allow us to benefit from the rapidly changing world technology order. Fortunately there is today a widely shared concern about the decreasing capital:output ratio in the industrial sector, the uncompetitive nature of our industry when faced with export pressures and over-dependence on the monsoons for our major growth area, namely agriculture. This has led to a policy of selective imports and adoption of modern technology.

A change in thinking as reflected in national policies will be the prime determinant of the future. The managers of the economy and the industry will need to comprehend the opportunities these changes are likely to provide in the future and the enormous social and economic impact that their contribution and success can bring to bear upon the nation.

### 3. Science and Technology

Developments in science and technology are the products of our tradition in the universities and the plan for self-

(Continued)



## DEVELOPING PEOPLE

reliance. The latter particularly was given impetus by the establishment of several well-known institutions of scientific research after independence. This had two weak links: lack of international contact and renewal, and the absence of the vital activity of converting innovation into industrial technology. Industry on its part was content to live with obsolete technology supplemented occasionally by one-time purchases from abroad.

This has resulted in the gradual erosion of high-quality scientific research and training in the country. The well-known seats of learning and institutes of research have declined in quality and output. The influence of science and scientists on the national economy has, at best, been limited. Many Indian scientists of international repute today reside on American campuses.

The interdependence of science and technology is a highly complex global issue involving geo-economic factors. Therefore, in framing a policy, a balance has to be struck between self-reliance and international linkages, which can help us achieve a desired level of excellence. A major dilemma is being faced in the area of electronics and communications. The great electronics and communications revolution of this century has not benefited us to the same extent as many other countries of the free world. In the rapidly evolving field of bio-technology we can make a greater impact on the economy only if there is wider involvement and participation both in the public as well as the private sectors.

The future of science and technology, a complex policy issue, must be uppermost in the minds of those who are responsible for managing the economy in this country, specially since the gestation periods in this area are rather long.

### 4. Education

In India the number of people who cannot afford education or can afford only a poor education, has risen enormously. Fortunately, the number of well-educated people who have the perception and tenacity to take society forward has also increased. It is this reservoir of talent which must be given the freedom to act. We must, as a nation, aim to create a large number of educational centres of excellence — centres which will create leaders in business, industry and public life. A sound and constantly improving education system is imperative for achieving national goals — an education system where we are exposed to both knowledge and training, in both content and feeling.

The school and university education upto the graduate level has made remarkable progress in spite of many serious im-

pediments. The emergence of young graduates and the enormous opportunities in this country augurs well for an exciting future. The combination of a well-founded basic education system along with the strengthening of scientific research and innovation will be the ingredients for future growth and prosperity.

### 5. Innovation

Innovation is the expression of the quality of science/technology education. Given the current state of scientific developments around the world and our own economic priorities, the areas of relevance are communication, agricultural productivity, human health and population control. Since each of these has a place in the scheme of economic priorities, the policies governing scientific research, education and economic/ industrial development will determine the future of innovation and provide the link between research institutes and industry by encouraging the translation of innovation into manufacturing technology.

These unusual issues must be understood and resolved in a systematic and purposeful manner. It is necessary to clarify that innovation is not the exclusive preserve of science and technology. It is a catalyst for bringing about change in all spheres of human activity, and improving the quality of life and thinking—perhaps within our own generation.

### 6. Human Relations

Human relations mould a society. Expectations about improvement in the quality of life have been generated in India. Since economic achievements have fallen short of expectations, they have created pockets of disaffection. The continuous influx of rural people into the urban industrial sectors has created enormous social problems, compounded by social militancy. Managing enterprises under these conditions requires not only professional competence and foresight but also the ability to grapple with an increasing number of exogenous factors.

While not too long ago we had mistaken a style of life for a necessity of life, present day managers are more attuned to the social commitment of equitable distribution of wealth and resources. They are also aware of the technology alternatives that are available to foster growth. On the whole they are reasonably well-equipped to tackle the modern day problems and need all the encouragement to get on with the task.

However, the tasks are getting more complex. The urban centres are groaning under the pressure of the enormous influx of people, and congestion, exploited by opportunist elements. These are beyond the

competence of individual corporations to tackle. Neglect here has led to decay, stagnation and unemployment—a process difficult to reverse—in once flourishing industrial centres in parts of India. Will some of the other industrial metropolises too go the same way? We can ill-afford to let this happen. The Administration must check and control those elements which thrive on exploitation of social tensions. We may have programmes for dispersal of industries and population control, but these are long term ones. If we do not tackle the problems that need our immediate and collective attention, the social and economic costs will be very high indeed.

## THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

While the national and organisational environments have an overwhelming influence on the process of human resource development, certain behavioral factors need to be understood. The training, development and motivation of individuals in an organisation ultimately influence its climate and culture. Therefore, under a given set of macro-conditions described above and our hopes and aspirations for the future, how do we plan and organise ourselves? To attempt an answer, some basic factors need to be examined.

### 1. Primary factors

Business organisations can survive only if they make a profit, unless they are subsidised by the exchequer. To the extent that businesses have to generate surpluses they have to be cost-effective in all activities. This also applies to the development of people in a company. Generally one tends to assume that all activities leading to the development of individuals will positively contribute to the effectiveness of business. We have questioned this naive notion. Training and development unrelated to the business or the environment is not cost-effective.

The two basic elements in developing people are:

(a) If the goals of the organisation are perceived as challenging, in tune with society, and if they are shared amongst the members of the business, the processes of building the business and the individual tend to be in harmony.

(b) If enough trust is not put in people working in the organisation and they are not given enough autonomy to work, the process of building the business suffers.

Developing human resources means creating a climate of opportunity and professional challenge so that individuals have a sense of achievement and fulfilment. This climate can only result from a readiness to recognise and reward effective performance.

It is, therefore, necessary to create a work environment and organisational ethos which provide the impetus for

(Continued)



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achievement and accountability under a given set of conditions. This is the major task of management in the development process.

In Hindustan Lever any individual who joins the company either as a trainee or a direct recruit or is promoted from the ranks is aware of the fact that it is not possible to either join or progress in the company except on merit. The company on the other hand acknowledges the fact that it is its primary role and responsibility to develop people.

### 2. Leadership Role

In the prevailing environment in the country, leadership which can rise above sectoral, communal and family interests is difficult to nurture. There develops a subtle atmosphere of self-aggrandizement. Self-interest groups use social and political freedom to further their cause. All these go counter to the national need and the ability to rise above the pressures and temptations of the present. It is, therefore, imperative to steer younger minds towards larger goals and broaden their vision of the future.

Senior management of Hindustan Lever play a very significant role in developing people. Primarily they create a climate of attitude and ethos for growth. It has taken years to build such a climate and it requires persistent efforts on the part of the seniors; for the achievements of several decades can easily be set back by a small mistake or mishap.

The senior management also nurture a climate which emphasises the pursuit of excellence, for only such a climate raises the level of ambition, performance and achievement, so vital for the development of people. Their leadership role is reinforced by the fact that those who have themselves been trained and developed within the organisation over the years and have through their achievements and personal qualities risen to the top rungs of the organisation are best attuned to the development needs of their subordinates.

In a system where a certain degree of attitudinal cloning is unavoidable, a great deal of care needs to be taken to recruit and develop people in a manner which prepares them for tasks which are more complex than what their predecessors may have been called upon to perform. The leadership role blends the wisdom of tradition with foresight.

### 3. Systems in Development

Ultimately, the development process must be accompanied by an appraisal system which is as objective as possible and consistent. The system must be able to accurately assess the performance, potential, strengths and weaknesses of each individual.

Secondly, appraisal of people needs to be linked with the requirements of tasks to be performed, and appropriate placement to provide experience, challenge, learning and growth. This in turn is derived from the business strategy for growth and manpower planning.

The systems of development provide scope for enhancing an individual's competence. Time and again it has been found that limits of competence keep on extending. Motivation too plays a very important role. Recognition is the prime source of motivation. It is not only recognition by superiors but also by the individual himself of his own contribution. Achievement, contribution and acceptance of responsibility with accountability are products of an interactive and successful development system.

## HINDUSTAN LEVER: POLICY AND PRACTICE

Having briefly outlined the development process, I will now examine a few selected areas with reference to our company.

### 1. Achieving change

A major achievement, during the last 20 years, has been the participation of a number of individuals in bringing about change within the company. This has happened through growth and diversification, through innovation, by catering to changing needs in marketing and distribution while at the same time keeping in tune with the evolution of cultural and social shifts. We have the added advantage of being a part of Unilever, which has been able to blend global opportunities with the economic priorities in a country. This has been supplemented by accepting the highest standards of business ethics, complete and unrestricted flow of expertise and information and upholding the role of the individual as an agent of change.

In growth and diversification, the management strategy led to investments in detergents, new foods and chemicals in a predominantly soaps and vanaspati business. Having resolved the major issue of foreign shareholding, the company is now in the process of reorganisation while planning future growth in chemicals, detergents, personal products, fertilisers and agriculture, as well as reinforcing the thrust in promoting exports.

The establishment of an R & D Centre in 1958 made significant contributions in two areas. Firstly, it helped strengthen some of the traditional businesses by developing new raw materials through science and technology. Secondly, the linkage between scientific discovery and technology transfer has been a very rewarding experience. But more significantly, it has in-

stilled and spread a culture of innovation and enquiry throughout the company. This has now been accepted as a natural expectation from the organisation and those who work in it.

In marketing and distribution, there is a gradual shift in emphasis from the urban to the semi-urban and rural markets. Although this is an area of traditional strength of the company, many innovative changes had to be introduced and continuous experiments on cost-effective methods undertaken.

With the growth of the company and its national corporate base, financial management, tax and investment planning, locational logic, and so on have all acquired wider dimensions.

The matrix of individuals' competence and the organisational needs is becoming more complex. It is for this reason that much more attention needs to be paid to these issues now than ever before.

### 2. Selection and Development

In Hindustan Lever the tradition of developing people dates back to over four decades. Among those who work in the company are people of considerable experience and accomplishment. They have reached the ranks of management and other senior positions from within the organisation. The process of creating opportunities for people with potential is a continuous one. The activity derives strength from its consistency, honesty and fairness. In an environment palpitating with regionalism, casteism and elitism, the total disregard for such considerations reinforces the basic strengths of the company and reflects in its character.

Discipline, productivity and team work are important characteristics. But along with these, each person, whatever his rank, must possess leadership qualities to be able to rise. It is only those who are able to lead men and be accountable — and derive considerable satisfaction from it — who can rise in the Hindustan Lever system.

In achieving success, the incentives are not only financial rewards, but new experience, challenge, learning and growth. We believe our people perform better not only because our goals are in tune with the environment, but also because one of the important criteria in evaluating achievement is the ability to constructively interact with people and accomplish difficult but clear objectives.

The direct recruits and trainees undergo a well-structured induction programme during the initial probationary period. In spite of the company's elaborate and well tested recruitment procedure we firmly believe that the individual as well as the company must ensure, through a period of fair trial and testing, that it is a durable and potentially productive match. Once this has been confirmed, it becomes the responsibility of the company to pro-



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vide the opportunity for growth in a planned manner.

To start with, the recruit is provided training and the opportunity to make the best possible use of his ability in the task he is assigned such as marketing and sales, manufacturing, engineering and development, finance and commercial, legal, personnel and so on. For scientific research, skills and training are of a different order and recruitment necessitates search in the international market.

In the career development process spanning the working life of an individual, emphasis is placed on a number of important criteria, such as:

(a) The ability to innovate in the individual's field of specialisation;

(b) To be able to interact positively with people above and below and be an effective team member;

(c) Ability to lead a group of men and achieve a set of objectives;

(d) Create an environment of healthy competition and commitment to excellence;

(e) Be sensitive to environmental and social realities in order to accomplish tasks ethically and honestly.

These simple criteria create an organisational atmosphere of fairness in matters of rewards and recognition. Furthermore, they generate a degree of confidence and competence which permits mobility across disciplines and functions as a rule rather than as an exception.

Effective and successful training and development systems which have withstood the test of time have been gradually extended to every part of the business; from operators and supervisors in the manufacturing units, to clerical and other staff in the offices and branches as well as to the field force engaged in selling and distribution. Of late it has been successfully extended to the training and communication requirements of our stockists and distributors with particular emphasis on rural markets.

The ease with which an organisation like Hindustan Lever can accomplish such complex tasks is facilitated by the fact that the ownership of the company is widely dispersed amongst a large number of shareholders and the disadvantages of a master-servant relationship do not exist. It might sound like a simple and mundane fact but it is a significant strength which is not always fully comprehended.

### 3. Participation and growth

Let us now consider another important development, namely the changing

pattern of interaction with people. The traditional distinctions between urban and rural, owner and manager, manager and worker are getting blurred. We have people in Hindustan Lever who are competent not only in the managerial sense, but are highly responsive to social changes. We insist that our people maintain a high standard of reputation as men of integrity and ability despite the fact that conflicting forces are present in the environment. We strive to create an appropriate human relations climate in the organisation with genuine concern for fellow men.

Today, we expect managers not only to be competent in their own areas, but to have an inherent ability and inclination to be able to communicate with their peers and subordinates. Workers' participation in management has been talked about for the past few years as a panacea for many of our industrial relations problems. Since managers and trade union leaders in India could not readily comprehend the concept and since historically the environment was not conducive to this sort of participative activity in a hierarchical society, it failed to take off. Management experts told us about the Dutch model and the German model — but none of these could work under a different set of social conditions. There is so much to gain through participation. Yet, we have had little progress. What is the remedy? It seems to me that all of us concerned — manager, employees and trade unions — need totally new attitudes to overcome this impasse. More important, we need to free ourselves from some deeply rooted prejudices and outdated values and beliefs.

There are, however, winds of change. People have started questioning the concept of high consumption urban islands as the ideal of success. The early Indian managers attempted to imitate a life-style which was alien. Their relationship with the workforce possibly was not dissimilar. But all this is now being replaced by a new set of socially conscious and highly competent second and third generation Indian managers. It is significant that one of the areas which young trainees in Hindustan Lever find particularly rewarding is the working period spent by them at our Integrated Rural Development Programme in Etah.

Social pressures and the stark economic realities are thus forcing a re-evaluation of the urban symbols of success. However, the unfortunate conflict in the new situation is the black economy and increasing scale of graft and corruption.

A change is also occurring in the thinking of responsible sections of trade union leaders and workers, especially in those parts of the country where militancy in the past has led to economic ruin and

human misery. Responsible and constructive union leadership has significantly benefited their constituents through legitimate means and in certain cases have contributed to improvement in productivity as well. It is under such conditions that rapport and two-way communication become more meaningful.

We believe it is necessary and prudent to share information on long-term opportunities as well as problems of the organisation so that when certain actions are taken their logic is not seen to be strange and threatening. Even in areas where militancy dominates and aspirations outdistance abilities, efforts to improve human relations may be twice as difficult but twice as necessary at the same time. Since communications and human relations programmes transcend narrow sectoral interests, the appeal of information sharing is enormous. Such an exercise must be judiciously blended with the workers' leadership role in modernisation, welfare, sports, children's education and other forms of family participation.

Creating a congenial human relations climate is an organisation's major responsibility. It is the primary task of managers. I sincerely believe that a combination of professional competence, genuine human concern and awareness of national and social values are imperative for conduct of successful business in India.

### 4. Communications

The nature of the business and its commitment to growth necessitates readiness on the part of the managers to communicate with people at all levels. This task is both simple as well as complex in certain respects. People today are better informed and are more knowledgeable. Furthermore, their questioning attitude about business and industry must be attended to. While in the company we normally do this by constantly updating systems and channels through on-the-job dialogue, works committees, trade unions, training courses, house journals, sports and cultural forums, it is also necessary to consider certain broader aspects of the subject.

It is recognised all over the world that good communication is indispensable to good business. As a result of the rapid development of the microprocessor and mini-computers, information synthesis and transmission are becoming not only routine but indispensable. But the essence of communication is not only transmission of information but of human dialogue. I believe communication is at the centre of all the changes which are occurring now and some which we can anticipate. Whether in innovation or development of technology or in marketing or in information sharing with employees, a well thought out and long-term policy is essential. Possibly the single most important function it performs is to send information upwards from different levels within the company and outside, thus greatly increasing the awareness

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of the environment amongst corporate decision-makers. Finally, communication is not an expertise, it is an essential management quality to be used effectively, and ideally, naturally.

External communication is equally vital. The economic press and business journals provide a useful service to the investing public. People in the farming community have access to transistor radios and now progressively to television. The trade channels are also better organised with improved services and are more widely spread, and in spite of shortages, the consumer is much better informed, better organised and more demanding. It is, therefore, increasingly unproductive to undertake corporate activities in isolation and away from the glare.

Awareness of these environmental factors and developing the ability to respond to the relevant ones during a working life are becoming an essential part of management. It is not enough to be aware, but each of these issues needs to be discussed and analysed in order to appreciate what influence it could have on our activities.

In various spheres we are probably

witnessing a slow integration and interaction of different affected groups beyond the realm of controls and regulations. The situation of shortages and high prices as well as the restricted availability of goods and services has affected the community and consumers rather severely. That this state of affairs is unacceptable to society as a whole is now being widely acknowledged. The response to these issues as well as the opportunities that they provide are ingredients which will test the manager's ability to successfully cope with change.

### CONCLUSION

More than any other human activity, the one which probably has the maximum influence on succeeding generations, is the development of people. The modern industrial culture in India is relatively new. So is the breed of the Indian professional manager. While he has been praised around the world for his hard work, dedication, intelligence and accomplishments, within India his record has been less exciting. While a fair amount of time has been devoted to adapting alien management cultures, little has been done to understand the impact of the country's economic policies, postures and regulatory legisla-

tions and their influence on development.

However, even within the conditions that obtain, successive generations of highly competent managers have been developed by many industries and corporations who have chosen to stay and work in the country and whose performance and track record match some of the best in the world. It is, therefore, necessary to examine from time to time, those factors and issues which constitute the elemental part of a successful human development process in a fast changing society. In the ultimate analysis, a country's roots in its culture, tradition and social goals determine the management philosophy. Its educational and training systems which provide industry and the society leaders of tomorrow must reflect this. Hindustan Lever is conscious of its commitment to the future and the company will continue to accord the highest priority to the task of developing people for meeting the challenges ahead.

*Note: This does not purport to be a report of the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting.*

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## Book Received

P. Leelakrishnan, *Consumer Protection And Legal Control—Essays and Papers*, Eastern Book Company, 1984, 332 p. Rs. 60.00.

A pioneering work which seeks to probe into the complex problems of consumer exploitation and attempts to evolve viable measures for solving them.

E.A. Ramaswamy, *Power And Justice—The State in Industrial Relations*, OUP, 1984, 218 p. Rs. 110.00.

A critique of the system of industrial relations that India has operated since independence and an assessment of theories from an empirical viewpoint.

Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Awadh*

*In Revolt 1857-1858—A Study of Popular Resistance* OUP, 1984, 219 p. Rs. 110.00.

A study of the popular character of 1857 Revolt in an area where British land revenue policies had violated traditional social norms and helped in solidifying peasantry and gentry against the imperial administration.

Kapil Kumar, *Peasants in Revolt—Tenants, Landlords, Congress and the Raj in Oudh*, Manohar, 1984, 261 p. Rs. 125.00.

A work of "history from below". It deals with the anti-feudal and imperialist struggles launched by the peasantry

in the area of Oudh—a taluq-dari region in British India.

John Anderson, Sunita Jain, *Find Me With Rain*, Amrit Publishing, 1984, 71 p. Rs. 50.00.

An interesting collection of poems by two poets, one living in England and the other in India about themes which echo each others thinking and sensibility.

N. Iqbal Singh, Amrita Shergil—*A Biography* Vikas, 1984, 190 p. Rs. 150.00.

A story of an almost legendary woman who achieved much within a brief life span of twenty-nine years and is today recognised as being among the greatest of India's modern painters.



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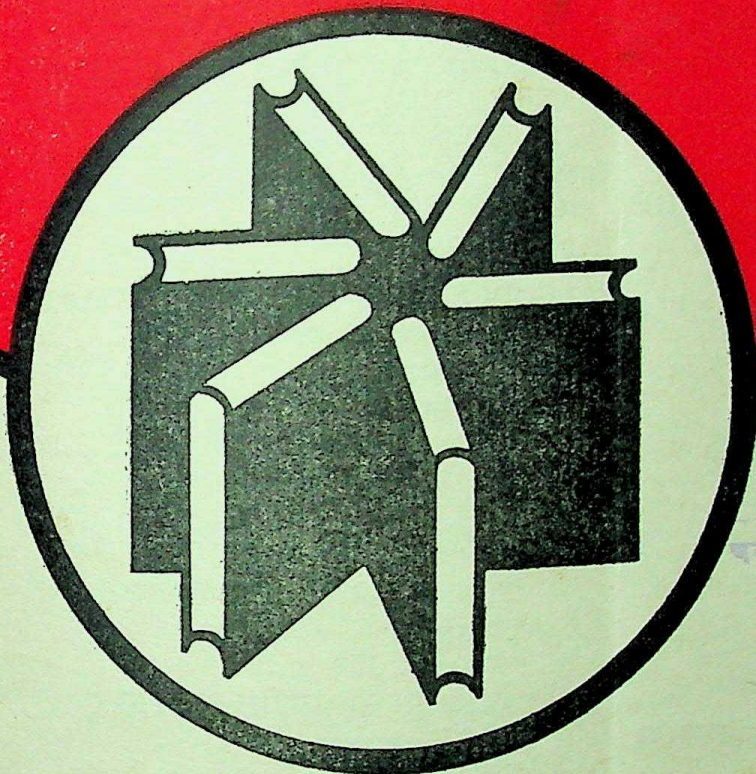


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An Anthology of  
Modern Oriya Poetry

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# Indian Book Chronicle

Vol. IX, No. 14, July 16, 1984

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## Verse In Translation : A Case For Oriya

Just as anthologies of short stories are hard to come by, we have a similar situation for translations of verse. *An Anthology of Modern Oriya Poetry*\* edited by the eminent poet Sitakant Mahapatra is one such collection, designed particularly to reach the non-Oriya reader. For while some Indians are condemned to write in English, some others are condemned to be translated so as to reach a pan-Indian readership. The latter in recent times, have obliquely contributed in a large measure to this mixed bag called 'Indian Writing in English'. We have come a long way since David McCutcheon warned us: "Above all, let us not encourage Indian writing in English to be regarded as a dog walking on its hind legs."

All that we ask of a language is that it be a sensitive filament to the changes in a national ethos, and in the general climate. This collection for the most part presents poems in their lucid translations. Many a poet comes alive in his poems here, and as many seek a kind of death too, for all serious writing is in a way, a dying into life. We have, for instance, Rajendra Kishore Panda's lines in "Half a Life" in this very anthology:

"Every dreamer reaches his dream,  
gets his salt, in Death.

The sea gets back its loan."

The poems are preceded by a thoughtfully written Preface by the Editor who begins, like almost everyone else, by the usual point of time to measure literary movements—the Indian Independence—although he sardonically warns that 1947 *per se* may not be as dramatic for literary movements as it has been for Indian history. However, he notes three major strands in pre-Independent verse, patriotism, the primacy of the person, and the radicalism of the thirties brought about chiefly by Marxism. He notes rightly, that in post-Independent verse, traditional emotions of patriotism, religion and the like were not only reviewed but juxtaposed and pitted against the very palpable erosion of values that the present century threw up, along with the crass material-

\*Sitakant Mahapatra, Editor, *An Anthology of Modern Oriya Poetry*, pp. xvii+85, Vikas Library of Modern Indian Writing, 1984. Rs. 35.00.

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ism and ugliness that rushed into the post-Gandhi India. Patriotism, eventually, dulled with use and slowly lost its colour along with its relevance.

This collection has a fair sampling of the Oriya mind in its interface with the rest of the culture of India. The arrangement of the poets is chronological and *not* alphabetical, the older poets appearing first, unfolding thereby some of the changes brought in by the younger ones. Specific mention has to be made about the basically human non-ideological slant of the poetry. One looks for them in contemporary verse.

And occasionally finds them. In the general facelessness of living, the poet tries to locate his self. Ananta Patnaik's "I Am", the opening poem in the collection, can find himself in the crevices of water-soaked bricks and is visible in the invisible. While this is straight, Benudhar Rout attempts the more circuitous route of grasping the chemical change when one self loses itself in that of another in "Love's Mystery". A confrontation that makes a lover tell his love.

"Your are my self's self  
as obscure to me as my own self."

Finding oneself is a quest that is always adventurous. One has to dive, as Radha Mohan Gadnayak expounds in "The Diver",

" dive  
into the echoless depths of the sea  
into her bottomless blue  
and seek  
her hidden heart."

He concludes bravely.

"If I chance on pearls  
victory will be mine.  
If no pearls come my way  
victory will still be mine."

There are times when this search is not adventurous but takes one to areas of bleak solitude. We sense a terrible loneliness in Sitakant Mahapatra's "The Other View: Yashoda's Soliloquy", a pilgrim soul watching over the anguish of living. The same poet brings a sense of truncated history in "The Ruined Temple."

"On the steps of the temple's pond  
on the large shoulders of the wise Ganesa  
are washed the greasy patchwork garments  
of tradition and history."

As the Editor pointed out, man had become increasingly aware of his own limitation and the circumscribed context he endured within the scheme of the given. We then have several

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poems in which the poet attempts to both define and explore these limits. In "Birthday", Sochi Rout-ray is sardonic of the typical Indian wish of living 'to be a 100'. The poet outlines the horror of this proposition:

"I retire at midnight with  
hollow dreams  
in the much-mended mattress  
of silk."

in which to dream those lustreless dreams.

There are limits and limits. To life. For J.P. Das, it could be the idea of mortality which hits one across the face, a life that comes into a standstill in the middle of it all, literally in the middle of the road in "Corpse". And for Sowbhagya Misra, time is a contingency like any other, in "Morning, perhaps seven-thirty":

"The bugle blows, and time  
burns like a dim  
useless bulb in the portico"

The same conversational tone belies the grave content of his other poem "Joy and Sorrow", a poem that certainly deserves a less simplistic title. For Mamata Dash who has to find her own place as a woman within the very narrow options, the effect is earned in the delicate irony of a feminine sensibility:

"Is it not true that  
I have a comfortable flat of my  
own  
Half a dozen sarees to taste  
Some amount of gold, and the  
License for living, for keeping  
young, and  
For measured sophistication of  
conduct."

Only, a doubt lurks if sarees



could be "tasted."

Apart from these thematic considerations, some of the poems establish themselves by a tight technique. "A Poem for Baba" by Guru Prasad Mohanty is one such poem, remarkable for its sustained cogency. The winter's fog, is like your grandma:

"like the grey gruel of her eyes  
the jute-hair on her head."

So is "Once Upon a Time" by Ramakanth Rath. His images also get loaded by ethnic values; he fears that his body.

"Would disappear like a widow's dreams," and "The river would have become the city's sewer."

There are tighter structures, as in "Even If" by Dipak Misra, a poem that reaches you neatly whole, despite its misleadingly regressive sweep. And then there are evocative ones, like Saroj Rajan Mohanty's "The Sorrow of the Paper Boat" where:

Stravana would give you once  
more  
the agony of injured manhood,  
of loss and defeat."

There are paper boats, much like paper tigers and even when birds sing, a poet like Pramod Kumar Mohanty can discern a falsetto in their voice in "Memory". And what's memory, anyway? The same poet sums it up succinctly:

'Memory is the square-root  
of time  
And each clock has a punishing  
look."

Altogether a decently produced book which seems to have suffered some little clumsiness by way of translation. Once again, it

proves in effect that a translation undertaken by a practising creative writer is far more self-assured than it would be otherwise. Some of the translators here are eminent poets on their own. There are occasional instances of archaic English, as in Sochi Routray's "Birthday". The line, "Bereft of the poison-tooth, defenceless," makes one wonder if one should use the word "bereft" any more? In others like Paresh Chandra Rout's "The Second Chapter", the translation is capable but what sticks in our throat uncomfortably is a set of

allusions to Troy, Circe, Libya and the like—all as alien as they come.

A certain liberation or freedom if you will, is what a poet (a writer) seeks. While he is about, it is time to discard foreign crutches, even if it would only mean leaning for awhile on Indian ones. For a crutch that is Indian can perhaps eventually be made to look like a limb of a poem, in the fluorescent light of creativity.

Lakshmi Kannan works in the Creative Department of the Hindustan Thompson.

## Depleting to Death

Gwyn Prins, Editor

Defended to Death

pp. 387, Penguin Books, 1983, £3.50

Reviewed by Narindar Singh

A great deal has been and continues to be written about the aftermath of the nuclear holocaust. Little wonder; for it is fairly widely perceived to be the grimmest catastrophe in our history that we as a race may have to contend with. Fairly widely, to be sure, but yet not widely enough. For if it were in fact seen as mankind's mode of self-extermination somewhat more commonly than it is; and particularly if among those who at least now would begin to see it thus were included the 'decision makers' of the modern world as also those to promote whose interests they made the decisions: we would not find it so difficult to dispel this menace as we now do.

Be that as it may, I am per-

suaded that both the complacent and the unconcerned would do well to read *Defended to Death* with the utmost care. Indeed, I consider it to be one of the more important books ever to have been written about the nuclear muddle of our time. I say this in spite of the fact that to my mind it suffers from a most serious weakness. Which lies in the failure of its authors to spell out the details of the kind of intellectual transformation which, misquoting Albert Einstein with notable abandon, they find necessary for our survival.

### EINSTEIN MISQUOTED

What I am referring to here is Einstein's famous remark that



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'the unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking'. This assertion was part of a telegram to several important Americans which Einstein signed on behalf of a group of scientists; and it appears on page 376 of *Einstein on Peace* compiled by Otto Nathan and Heinz Norden (Simon Schuster, New York, 1960). It seems somewhat surprising that while most of those who choose to write on nuclear affairs today cannot help referring to this remark, they tend only to misquote it. In fact, I have already seen six or seven different ways in which it has been distorted.

So, I was hardly surprised to see the following variant of it on page 28 of *Defended to Death* 'The power set free from the atom has changed everything, *except our ways of thought*'. The emphasis here is *not* mine; nor are the quotation marks. But what I do want to emphasize here is the fact that the authors of *Defended to Death* do not seem to have found it sufficient to give only one distortion of the Einstein quotation. And returning to it much later, on page 193, they say: Albert Einstein's observation, *quoted already, bears repetition*: 'With the nuclear age everything changes—except the way that men think.' Do please note that the emphasis *this time* is my own. And I, do wish too that the authors had taken the readers a little more seriously and spent an additional minute or two to check if they had at least put the same words in Einstein's mouth on the two occasions. But in that case, they certainly would have been able to track down the original quo-

tation as well.

What we find here is a team of Cambridge scholars distorting a remark which is so eminently quotable and is at the same time so easily accessible. And, then, forgetting its own 'original' distortion, it goes on to treat us to one more. One is disappointed because *Defended to Death* is full of quotations meticulously referenced and put in separate boxes. Also disappointing is the failure of Penguin's editors to detect and rectify this error. To misquote a well-known observation of Einstein's not just once but twice and to shower such attention on much smaller mortals is a lapse for which neither the authors nor the editors can even expect to be pardoned.

#### VERBAL SUBTERFUGING

But this is not my substantive point. Which rather is that *Defended to Death* fails to articulate the logical implications of its own plea that our modes of thinking must change if we have to survive. To be sure, it does take the first step in the right direction. But only the first. Which lies in its plea that we take care to question and reject the concepts cleverly created by the overpaid and over-pampered ideologues of the nuclear barons. The authors, argue, and rightly, that since a discussion of nuclear warfare must perforce deal with such repulsive events as the minds of normal people, including many soldiers, must find hard to bear, many euphemisms have been devised to soften the impact on the imagination. For instance: in place of the incineration of great tracts of countryside—of plants, animals, people—we

hear merely of 'collateral damage'. Similarly, the term 'unacceptable damage', implies that there is a kind of damage which, no matter how devastating, would still be quite 'acceptable': millions of burned mangled and disintegrated bodies; millions, too, of gravely wounded and grief-crazed 'survivors': courses and reservoirs of water laden with radioactivity, and soil polluted and food stocks poisoned.

Incidentally, as *Defended to Death* reminds us, the U.S. Air Force at one time regarded 50 million direct American fatalities as a consequence of a Soviet second strike to be perfectly 'acceptable'. Little wonder that the intended obliteration of great cities is cynically designated as 'demographic targeting.'

Such verbal subterfuging cannot conceivably have any purpose other than the following: to hit the people, as Oscar Wilde would have said, below the intellect. For thus they would not be able to question the legitimacy of the power that the 'decision-makers' wield nor of the decisions they make.

#### DOMESTIC LEGITIMATION

And as we shall see presently the decision-makers need such questioning acquiescence in gross measure, too. The late B.P. Khera, when Prime Minister of India, once asked his generals, 'How could they defeat the Indian Army. Or, perhaps, the Chinese Army? The answer to either question being an obvious no, he put a further question: 'Then what for our Army for, since these are only two armies you physically



confront?"

Of course, the generals did not find that to be very funny. But they knew as well as Koirala did that the Army was needed for the domestic legitimation of the prevailing power structure.

That is exactly what the supposedly different and ever multiplying varieties of missiles and their corresponding deterrence and war-fighting strategies are also meant for. For it simply is inconceivable that any or all of these missiles could ever be used by either side to overwhelm the other militarily. The only use to which they can conceivably be put and to which they are actually being put is to castrate the domestic populations so thoroughly that they cease to question the legitimacy of the prevailing pyramids of power. Therefore, 'in order to reject the whole way of thinking that the (British) Government's policy represents,' the authors of *Defended to Death* would have done well to emphasize the domestic goals of nuclear buildups and policies. The Government's chess-playing analogy would then have appeared to them to be yet another subterfuge designed entirely to conceal the real issues involved. And absolutely the most important of these issues is the accumulation today of historically unprecedented quanta of power,—of power so massive that the instruments embodying it cannot even be used without risking planetary annihilation. Games like chess may formalize conflict and that conflict may assume intense aggression in the putative opponent. Nevertheless, modern missiles are not battleships of yore. For successive 'generations' of them may be

deployed only within one's own part of the global chessboard. The chess-playing analogy which *Defended to Death* takes so seriously also fails in the sense that unlike the number of pawns and rooks, the number of missiles is not fixed; and, further in the sense that missiles cannot be moved from one half of the chessboard into the other, much less to 'kill' any missiles there. For the moment that happens, the board, the pawns and the players would all be reduced to radioactive dust. Indeed, as the authors insist, counterforce strategy—pointing missiles to the other side's missiles—is the clearest expression of the exasperation with the contradiction that the most powerful weapons ever invented seem to be unable to contribute to the utility of military power as an instrument of policy. But the moment we consider them as instruments of domestic policy, the contradiction vanishes.

It seems, therefore, that it is only in order to keep themselves employed that the strategists of the two sides keep perfecting one nuclear war-detering or war-fighting strategy after another. What they have in common is their neglect of the fact that each half of the planetary chess board has people who have to be made to pay for the missiles and who must otherwise be kept as passive as possible. Therefore, contrary to what the authors of *Defended to Death* assert, deterrence is primarily not the continuation of diplomacy by other means but of domestic policy. In other words, and in the nuclear age in any case, foreign policy is no more than an instrument of domestic policy. And the paramount purpose of

domestic policy today is to domesticate the underlying populations on either side and irrespective of what are claimed to be fundamental ideological differences between them. For without such domestication, the common people would not provide the resources for the unending proliferation of diabolical and yet unusable weapons systems.

The centrality of this consideration is often suggested in *Defended to Death*, but is not taken to its logical limit. On one occasion for instance its authors quote Admiral Gene La Roque (Retd.) to the effect that by publicizing the Soviet military buildup, the Pentagon seeks 'simply to scare the pants off the American public and our European and Japanese allies'. Besides, they do not fail to remind us that this is exactly what the Soviet Establishment also does. This only means that basic to a change in 'our modes of thinking' which Einstein considered necessary for our survival is a rejection of the contemporary concentrations of power, communist or capitalist, which in order to exist must keep scaring the pants off their respective people. Therefore, even if nuclear weapons cannot now be disinvented, such pyramids of power as alone can extract resources out of the people for the proliferation of weapons systems can certainly be demolished.

#### ACUTE AWARENESS

All that we need to this end is an awareness so acute that the domestication of the people, or as Paulo Freire would say a 'massification of the masses' cannot take place any longer. To this end, we



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can do little better than to emphasize that rearmament on either side is not even intended to promote the security of the common people. Which is actually *reduced* in the process. In the short run, through mounting inflation, joblessness and societal chaos; and in the long run, through the growing probability of an 'accidental' holocaust. The conclusion is inescapable, therefore, that when the ruling circles of either superpower raise levels of military spending for reasons of security, they intend only to keep secure their own positions and interests. But in view of the very ultimate hazards that they manage also to generate in the process, their perception of their own interests is quite clearly short-sighted. This is the reason why we need nothing less than the chain reaction of awareness, to borrow an expression from Albert Einstein. To bring mankind to the point of 'criticality' where this kind of chain reaction can take place would be the profoundest educational undertaking of all time.

#### THE 'FOREMATH'

Central to this task is the insistence that what matters *now* is a concern *not* with the aftermath of the nuclear holocaust but with what may be called the 'foremath' of it. It is *this* which the generals and other managers of the supposedly rival military blocs are entirely unconcerned with. Which precisely is the reason why they can talk of a war which from *their* point of view is still quite cold. But from the point of view of the common people, this war is pretty hot already.

ready. For it is on them and on them alone that it imposes, and right now, a variety of penalties and deprivations.

This only means that we must focus on the fact that in claiming to be concerned with what passes for 'defence', the ruling circles of either side are so depleting the planet in general and making life more and more difficult for their own wards in particular that before long nothing will even be left to be defended. This also means that in order to paralyse us all, if not to destroy us altogether, a nuclear war *doesn't* have to take place. Or, perhaps it may already be taken to be taking place. For, we would only have to remember that it is taking place not between the two power blocs but rather between the ruling circles of the two blocs on the one hand and the underlying population of the world on the other. What the aggressors have to do in this situation is only to continue to stockpile and deploy various weapons systems.

Besides, in order to remain entrenched, they must see to it that the systems being deployed remain unfired. Thus alone can the victims of this relatively subtle aggression be made to suffer it *ad infinitum*. In the circumstances, it is only natural that, as Ivan Selin, himself a leading Pentagonist once, would have said, either side should continue to produce the weapons that don't work to meet the threats that don't exist.

#### PATRIOTIC STAMPEDE

I say all this because this is the way that I look at the pre-

vailing reality, and also because this is not the way that the authors of *Defended to Death* seem to look at this reality. Thus, to them it appears to be defined by mutual fear and distrust between the two blocs. Therefore, as far as *they* are concerned, it follows that our primary concern ought to be with foreign and not with domestic policy considerations and also that a foreign policy based on nuclear destruction as its main instrument could only intensify 'the dangers that beset us'.

What I am saying instead is that the threat of nuclear destruction held out to the Other Side is primarily a gimmick employed by the ruling circles of This Side and it is intended essentially to promote not foreign but domestic policy goals. It is to this end that each Establishment, evoking a grave national emergency, generates what General Douglas MacArthur once called 'a continuous stampede of patriotic fervour'. Speaking of his own side, he added: 'Always there has been some terrible evil to gobble us up if we did not blindly rally behind (our government) by furnishing the exorbitant sums demanded. Yet, in retrospect, these disasters seem never to have happened, seem never to have been quite real'.

What MacArthur did manage to see was not a half-truth, to be sure. But it still was only half of the truth. For while emphasizing that the threat as sought to be projected by those in power was by no means real, he failed to transcend the limitations of his own class; and it was thus that he failed also to take note of the very real threat posed by the



ruling circles of the USA to the American people or of a similar threat posed by the Soviet Establishment to its own people. These threats are certainly far more subtle than the threat which is over-emphasized by the rulers on either side; and we have already taken note of the ways they manifest themselves: unemployment, misemployment, inflation etcetra.

Put in this light, the primary concerns of the authors of *Defended to Death* can be seen to be entirely secondary. And this to the point that they do not raise the real issue at all. To be sure, there is a reference early in the book to 'the ramifying consequences which the arms race has on ordinary people throughout the world, even in the absence of nuclear war.' But those 'ramifying consequences' do not come anywhere near becoming the central concern of the book. For it remains more or less exclusively concerned with the 'fears' of destruction which each side expects to suffer at the hands of the other.

The authors certainly are aware that the 'facile division of mankind into entrenched, mutually alien armed camps, each defended to death, will be the death of us all unless we act soon to stop it'. But they do not take the next obvious step and insist that the prevailing divisions of mankind into ruling circles and *their respective populaces*—and these are by no means facile divisions—are also promissive of the death of us all. This could happen either through a more or less sudden incineration the possibility and the probability of which are fairly

generally recognized, or through a relatively slow paralysis the probability or the possibility of which is yet not very close to the human consciousness.

#### SCHEMING PEOPLE

This exactly is the reason why the security managers of each side are able to make tendentious noises about the growing might of the other. And they manage to do it so successfully that the millions whose security they pretend to be managing continue to provide the sums demanded. Nevertheless, the authors of *Defended to Death* make it a point to insist that those in the business of defence like a Mr. Michael Legge of Britain may not necessarily be 'evil or scheming people'. For, 'their failing is more that of narrowly blinkered vision'. I am intrigued by this and am persuaded instead that the visions in question get narrowly blinkered only because the psyches in question are not very sturdy. As the authors say a little later, such people come to believe their own 'deceptions'. Still, they fail to see that those who seek to deceive others, no matter who those others may be, cannot but be 'evil or scheming people'.

Therefore, what I wish to argue here is this: those who owe their very professional *existence* to their success in creating illusions must perforce be recognized to be evil or scheming people. President John Kennedy's is a particularly revealing case. As a recent biography with an exceedingly appropriate title of *A Hero For Our Time* shows, he shared one mistress with his father, one with

his brother Robert and one with a Mafia gangster who had been hired to kill Castro, and many others with many others. Such a man would have been obliged to tell a million lies to his wife, for one, and would in fact have turned bluffing into a fine art.

Little wonder that he made an intensive use of falsehood to win his entry into the White House. I am referring here, of course, to what came to be known as the Missile Gap. This was an expression coined deliberately to confuse the American voters into believing that the Republicans had allowed the Soviet Union to acquire a dangerous strategic lead in terms of missiles. And he knew all the time that what he was saying was a complete travesty of truth, and ample evidence to this effect has been reproduced in *Defended to Death* itself. No wonder that the moment he got elected, the Missile Gap, whatever its intrinsic worth, was quietly allowed to be forgotten.

But if the road to the White House is paved with monumental and carefully fabricated falsehoods, the floors of the building also seem to have been paved with little else. Else, the Nixons and the Reagans of our Age could hardly be at home there. It may seem surprising, but even Dwight Eisenhower whose style of life had little in common with that of Kennedy and who, while retiring, was to warn the American people of the risks involved in the continued rampancy of the military-industrial complex, could not help trying to becloud them on his own. In fact, he once advised the members of the US Atomic Energy Commission to



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leave such words as 'thermonuclear', 'fusion' and even 'hydrogen' out of their press releases and speeches. And Gordon Dean, Chairman of the Commission at the time, made the following entry in his Diary on 27 May 1953: The President says keep them *confused* as to 'fission' and 'fusion'.

The 'them', of course were not and could not have been the Soviet scientists; they were and could only have been the American people. I do not have corresponding information about what particular members of the Soviet Establishment do to keep their own 'them' in a state of perpetual confusion. But given the 'advantages' which a completely closed society makes available to them, they could well find the task of confounding 'them' to be relatively easy. More so, because not unoften, the Western Establishments may also be eager to collude with them at least tacitly and thus help them hide what they do not want the peoples of world in general and their own people in particular to know.

## COVERT COLLUSION

A most interesting case is that of the nuclear disaster which took place in the southern Urals in the winter of 1957-58 and which happens to be one of the worst that ever took place anywhere. What concerns us here about this accident is not its severity but the fact the CIA—which is now known to have started a file on it by the spring of 1958—was as keen on a coverup as the Soviet Government itself could possibly have been. And even when Zho-

res Medvedev, a dissident Russian biologist, did manage to reveal the details of this accident in a 1976 article in the *New Scientist*, it was not a card-carrying Commie but Sir John Hill, the Chairman of the British Atomic Energy Authority at the time who dismissed the revelation as 'rubbish', 'pure science fiction', and 'a figment of the imagination'. The reason of course, was that a public outcry about the accident would have been embarrassing in the extreme to the nuclear lobby in the West as well.

Even more telling forms of the covert collusion between the two

superpowers are the SALT arrangements which merely seek to regulate their arms buildup. Thus, under SALT II, each side was obliged to dismantle a token number of operational systems. And for this purpose, as the authors note, obsolete systems that were already due to be retired could be chosen. Besides, each side would be allowed to have one new ICBM system, which in any case is a curious way of arms limitation. Indeed, according to the authors, so 'congenial' are these terms to the respective military establishments that even without (the US) Senate ratifica-

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tion, they appear to be being observed'.

#### MUTUAL ACCOMODATION

This argues a state of mutual accomodation between the super-powers, and I am surprised that their clear recognition of this fact notwithstanding, the authors presume a state of *mutual fear and mistrust* between the two. Which presumption turns out to be particularly unsustainable in view of their analysis of what they call the Steel Triangle. This is a coalition of deeply entrenched military, academic and industrial interests, and helps to propel the process of arms accumulation. In speaking of the military-industrial complex, Eisenhower recognized only two sides of this triangle. Merely because close to ninety per cent of all military contract work in the United States is obtained without bidding, giant corporations have a clear stake in weapons proliferation. So have at least the 'decision-makers' of the armed forces who have not only their present jobs to keep but who have also to get corporate jobs after retirement. And, finally, with generous research grants being made available only if they agree to do R & D work for the Pentagon, the scientists also acquire a stake in the expansion of a culture of weapons.

The point of it all is that such people cannot even afford to wait for any external threat to arise. In fact, they actually take every care to continue to *manufacture* external threats. It would hardly be a *steel triangle* if those constituting it had to wait for *genuine* international crises to occur. They

actually bring such crises about.

Therefore, contrary to what *Defended to Death* insists,, nuclear weapons *as such* are *not* a Frankenstein's monster and *have not* acquired the power to dictate any policies to their human masters. Indeed, to say this would be to say that nothing at all can be done to eliminate the risk of a nuclear war. Therefore, I am persuaded of the absolute necessity of building a popular anti-nuclear movement to the point that the political machine itself is brought under effective control. In fact, it was no other than Robert Oppenheimer who had this to say as early as 1953: 'This growth (of nuclear weapons), though natural technically, is not inevitable. If the (U.S.) Congress had appropriated no money, it would not have occurred'.

#### A SERIOUS MISCONCEPTION

However, the profound tragedy of our time lies in the fact that those vested with the power to allocate funds for development and production of weapons system have not, and continue to refuse to be, even bothered with the sheer extravagance of it all. This is rather disappointing. In particular because modern weapons, no matter how sophisticated and expensive, are now increasingly being recognized to be resounding *technological* failures. They cannot even be tested in real world situations. One can do little better here than to quote James Schlesinger himself: The precision that one encounters in paper studies of nuclear exchanges reflects the precision of assumptions rather than any experience based on approxi-

mations-to-life test data. Specialists, in their enthusiasm, tend to forget how conjectural the whole process remains.... Not only have ICBM's never been tested in flying operational trajectories against operational targets, they have not been tested flying north and this may or may not introduce certain areas of bias in the estimates of accuracy. Nuclear weapons have never flown 6,500 miles through space with the accompanying acceleration and deceleration and therefore we have no real test data regarding failure rates'.

But unaware of this and many a related consideration, the authors of *Defended to Death* merely assert, and the italics are theirs, that at 'every stage of the arms race since 1946, scientists have (only) *over-achieved*'.

This is all the more disappointing because even a nodding acquaintance with biology and with thermo-dynamics—and this is irrespective of anything whatsoever that has been said above—would have assured the authors that the weapons scientists of today could not but have *over-failed* in the making of militarily usable weapons. For there is such a thing as the biosphere or the sphere of life around the earth. Having recently been designated as Gaia, after the Greek Earth goddess, the biosphere is now known to be entirely incapable of absorbing the cosmic explosions which must perforce take place even during a 'limited nuclear exchange. It simply will collapse. In particular, because all the debris thrown up by some megatons of explosions can be reasonably expected to throw the planet into a state of what is being described as the nuclear winter.



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Even Edward Teller himself whom the authors quote has said that 'unfortunately', the bombs are too big and the planet is too small.

The powers that be cannot conceivably be unaware of all this. Which only shows why their bellicosity notwithstanding, they have managed to avoid actual nuclear exchanges. And this supports my contention that using the gimmicks of artificial threats, the two Establishments continue to produce these diabolical weapons only to browbeat their own people as also

the people of their respective satellite countries into submission. But they cannot but deplete the planet in the process. And the way this depletion is taking place, there may be nothing left to defend even if it ever was intended to be defended.

*Narindar Singh is on the staff of the Zakir Husain Centre, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His Book Economics and the Crisis of Ecology (OUP) was recently translated into Japanese.*

## Aesthetic and Meaningful

Jan Morris and Simon Winchester

**Stones of Empire: The Buildings of the Raj**

pp. 234+Illustrations, Oxford University Press, 1983, Rs. 210.00

Reviewed by Narayani Gupta

In a decaying palace in Murshidabad, built for the Nawab by a British engineer in the 1830s, a mournful guide points to a Titian reproduction, and introduces it to his captive audience as being a painting by "the famous British artist After Titian." The state of our knowledge of British colonial architecture in India is such that I wonder how many people can even list the 'After Kedleston' and 'After St. Martin-in-the-Fields'. Here is a book that can help us do it and is also, happily, a joy to read.

Fifteen years ago, in a foreword to that other splendid book on the same subject, Sten Nilsson's *European Architecture in India 1750-1850*, Sir John Summerson remarked on the fact that the author was a Swedish scho-

lar and suggested that the reason why no Englishman had done it was "the embarrassing load of apprehensions, prejudices and inhibitions about India and about imperialism which most educated Englishmen carry around with them." Things have changed since then. Educated Englishmen are now writing happily about Bombay, Calcutta, Simla and Ooty, about cantonments and bungalows, about civil lines and about the 'palaces of the Raj'. In Morris, the feel of British India, a mixture of Betjeman and Somerset Maugham, is evoked, but *Indian India* 'the ancient, jumbled, unhygienic, complex, and often beautiful cities' (Morris, p. 89) remains as remote as it did to the sahibs of a bygone age. Within these limits, the ghetto culture of a people 'living luxuriously but

seldom easily (p. 40) is superbly described.

### CURZON AND AFTER

Curzon's last words are supposed to have been 'Victoria Memorial'. His death in 1925 occurred at a time when British building in India was tapering off. Domestic architecture retained a surprising sameness from the seventeenth through to the twentieth century. Formal architecture began grandly and Greekly in the eighteenth century, remained stagnant in the early nineteenth, attempted to incorporate Indian elements from the 1860s, and was thought sufficiently important to justify the appointment of a Consulting Architect for the Government of India in 1902. The grand climax of the building of New Delhi was somewhat deflated by the exigencies of the War. In the buildings of the Raj, Morris sees "the mingled emotions of British imperialism, at once so arrogant and so homesick." (p. 11). The arrogance continues into the architectural hierarchism of independent India and the homesickness has become metamorphosed into a Raj-sickness which explains the enormous popularity of books so varied as that of Paul Scott and M.M. Kaye, and ranging from reproductions of the Daniells to photographs of New Delhi.

Morris contrasts the art of "highly advanced Western country (which) stood in the direct line of descent from Greece, Rome, the Gothic master-masons and the Renaissance" to that of a country whose educated architecture sprang from different roots altogether, and whose vernacular



styles were evolved to meet the demands of extreme poverty and simplicity of material." (p. 14) As it happened, India's educated architecture' wore a lot better than did much of what the British built, and its 'vernacular styles' made for a lot more comfort than did the British 'bungle-ohs'. The Doric pillars, transported in a manner of speaking from Greece to India via Britain, did not wear well. The trappings of Empire cannot be achieved on Gladstonian budgets. If the Indian pillars were not alabaster, but mere lath-and-plaster, the British had only themselves to blame. The shoddiness of many of the structures built by army engineers in India were due to penny-pinching, unfamiliarity with Indian materials and climate, insufficient use of local expertise, and often working with plans drawn up in London. They all but killed off Indian 'educated architecture' which survived in Gujarat and Rajasthan, areas distant from the heart of Empire. They also inflicted their norms of style on the Indian rulers—hence the Parthenons and Windsor Castles perched incongruously in an Indian town or on the banks of the Ganga. Only in 1862 did Fergusson protest against the Doric columns "built up as mere ornaments, and generally so as to obstruct ventilation.

#### WHOSE HERITAGE?

Though much of British architecture in India was imitative, uncomfortable and sometimes irrelevant, there are many buildings which call for preservation and for an approximation to their original use. There are

also many fine institutions of British public building—the museums and libraries—and public gardens, for which they deserve our gratitude. The superb illustrations in this book will help the process of identifying them and giving some attention to them. The nostalgia evoked by Currier and Ives prints has led to areas of American built-up landscape being restored and preserved. In India we are perpetually up against the dilemma—whose heritage? The Victoria Memorial Museum has recently added a gallery of pictures of tribal revolts to the main gallery

of Daniells prints. In Simla we read the plaque which announces a building to be 'Rashtrapati Niwas'—built in 1885 by Lord Dufferin. There is a sterility and a tastelessness in this manner of updating. We may criticise the colonial regime, but as long as we continue to use the English language, let us remember the Raj in a more aesthetic and meaningful fashion. For helping us towards this, our gratitude to Jan Morris and Simon Winchester.

*Narayani Gupta lectures in history at I.P. College, University of Delhi.*

## Indians in South Asia

I.J. Bahadur Singh, Editor

*Indians in South Asia*

pp. 268, *Sterling*, 1984, Rs. 100.00.

Reviewed by Man Mohini Kaul

This is the third volume in the series on Indians living abroad. The first and second volumes are titled *Other India* and *the Indians in Southeast Asia*. All three have commendably been edited by I.J. Bahadur Singh. He is the Director of a Project sponsored by the India International Centre on Overseas Indians and is himself an overseas Indian.

The recent anti-Tamil riots in Sri Lanka have brought to the fore problems facing Indians in other countries as well. Most of these Indians migrated abroad during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. These migrations were due to the imperatives of colonialism. Manpower was required by the colonial powers

to work on plantations, railways and public works department. The indigenous population was not interested as most of them worked on traditional farms for a living.

The Position of Indians in most of the countries of South and Southeast Asia is far from enviable. Over the years there has hardly been any improvement in their living conditions. The Indian government is in a dilemma. Though it has throughout maintained that Overseas Indians must identify themselves with their country of domicile, it cannot be indifferent to their plight. After all, racial tensions involving Indian origin people affect this country too. The recent



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exodus of Indians from Sri-Lanka, and not so long ago from Burma and Malaysia have caused concern.

This book contributes to the understanding of the problem of Indians in South Asia. It lives up to the description on the dust jacket that it "discusses the Sirimave-Shastri Pact and the fortunes of the People of Indian Origin in Sri Lanka, the rehabilitation of Sri Lanka repatriates, the socio-economic status of the Indians and the emerging political order in South Asia and the joint ventures abroad with special reference to South Asia". There is also an exhaustive bibliography and an appendix giving the current population estimates of persons of Indian descent for 149 countries.

#### SRI LANKAN SYNDROME

Part I of the book has an interesting introduction by Bahadur Singh where he acquaints the reader with the subject for discussion in Part II. Out of eleven essays in Part II, four deal with Sri Lanka. This has resulted in a lot of repetition. Of these the most outstanding essay is by V. Suryanarayan titled, "The rehabilitation of Sri Lanka Repatriates". Besides being scholarly, the essay has succinctly brought out the human aspect of the problem. There are many moving accounts of Sri Lankan Indians in his essay. On the departure of Indians from Sri Lanka, Suryanarayan writes that it is extremely painful. "Sentiments overtake reason, the repatriates try to pack all their belongings

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from pictures of family deities to grinding stones. Some of them even carry a handful of earth from their homes and from the graves where their forefathers were buried". One can see that the overall position of Indians in Sri Lanka, is bleak. Among the estate workers the drop-out rate and unemployment is the highest. The Sri Lanka Government has not done anything to alleviate their position. Unfortunately, the Indian Government too (as is obvious from Suryanarayan's essay) has done very little towards rehabilitation of the repatriates from Sri Lanka. What is sad is "that the people of Indian origin were reduced to status of 'Merchandise' by the two countries in the name of good neighbourly relations".

Afghanistan, seems to be the only country in South Asia where Indians did not face any major problems. The essay on "Indian community in Afghanistan" by Abdul Ali Argandawi has lucidly explained the position of Indians in Afghanistan. It is comforting to note that Indians there are "economically well off and have monopolized a major portion of Afghanistan's trade. They are protected by the Afghan Government and enjoy equal political rights as the other communities of Afghanistan". Countries like Nepal which have plenty in common with India should learn from Afghanistan and treat its Indian minority with tolerance. Integration should mean promotion of greater understanding and harmony among the divergent ethnic groups. Parmanand in his essay on Nepal states, "On the whole the problems faced by the

people of Indian origin are enough to suggest that their role in the nation building and national integration has not been properly accepted."

On its part the Indian Government must win the trust of the countries in which Indian origin people are living. It must assure them that it does not like to interfere in the minority problems of others, but when integration leads to forcible assimilation of Indians, then India has to speak out. S.D. Muni has touched on this aspect in his essay on "Indians in South Asia Socio-Economic Status and the Emerging Political Order." To quote him: "The personal rapport and understanding between the leaders and ruling elites of the two sides was a very crucial factor". Ultimately, it is for the South Asian countries to assuage the fears of their minority communities. If different races don't learn to coexist the alternative would be the Sri-Lankan situation everywhere.

#### NARROW FOCUS

Somehow, the essays on Pakistan and Bangla Desh are narrowly focused and too brief to be satisfactory. Taranath Bhat's essay on "Indian Joint Ventures Abroad with Special Reference to South Asia" is outdated. The deteriorating relationship between India and Sri Lanka belies Dr. Bhat's picture of a rosy future for joint ventures in Sri Lanka. In addition, his essay has too many details to make it exciting reading.

It is not possible to comment



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## DRAWBACK

One of the drawbacks of the work (of which the author is aware) is that the majority of illustrations are copies and tracings prepared by artists and not photographs. Whatever the technical difficulty, the copies and drawings do appear more 'streamlined' and 'clean' than the originals.

The book deals with the rock paintings and engravings found at Mirzapur, Bijaigarh Fort, Robertsganj, Sohagi, Almora, etc. in Uttar Pradesh; at Raigarh, Sagar region, Sauro-Mauro, Budhni, Adamgarh, Putlikarar, Udaygiri, Sanchi, Lakhajaoar, Bhimbetka, Chiklod and Raisen regions, as well as Kathotia and Bhopal regions in Madhya Pradesh; at Chaturbhoj Nath Nulla, Sitakhardi, Chitakho, Modi, Gandhi Sagar, Kapildara, Kanjadei, Kota and Bhanpura regions in Rajasthan; at Lifripara in Orissa and at Bellary, Tirupati, Vettavalam and Munnar areas of the South.

Maximum attention has been paid to the rock paintings of the Mesolithic period 'which have received very step-motherly treatment so far despite the fact that they cover the longest span of painting activity in India'.

One gratifying aspect of the book is that the paintings are studied in their cultural context. Their secular and religious significance is deftly brought out: 'it is even possible that the execution of the painting was in itself a magical exercise and that—not very likely, but still possible—

the finished product was of no importance after the act of execution'. In this context it may be pointed out that the work would have gained to a great extent by a comparative study of the rock paintings with the contemporary tribal art of the various regions of India.

Occasionally the author has slipped into highly contrived observations: 'Dances and cult activities around a stake or a pillar could indicate a popular *axix mundi* cult which late developed into the pillar-erecting activity of which the pillars of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka are the climax'.

The greatest assets of the book

are the painstakingly prepared long and comprehensive captions below every picture. Through these even a layman could obtain a great deal of information and insight into the rock painting without suffering the pain of learning the 'specialised terminology of prehistoric archaeology'.

The book with its 210 monochrome (shade of *geru*, iron oxide) plates and drawings and 17 black and white photographs and illustrations is a precious work. The production and design are simple but effective—like the rock paintings.

*Jyotindra Jain is a leading art critic who recently moved to Delhi from Ahmedabad.*

## Technology Treadmill

Kusum Nair

Transforming Traditionally Land and Labour use in Agriculture in Asia and Africa

pp. 168, *Allied*, 1983, Rs. 75.00.

Reviewed by M. Gopalakrishnan and S.Y. Govindarajan

Kusum Nair who shot into prominence as an able writer on peasant agriculturists of India and the Third World through her *Blossoms in the Dust* has written this book. It is a study of rural development in India, China and Africa. The publishers say that this is the first book in the series "Perspective on Asian and African Development". The book is the outcome of a project of study undertaken by the author (and funded by the USAID) with the knowledge she had gathered over two decades of direct observation, interviews and research in the

production-behaviour of farmers and peasants in several countries (vide the opening sentence of her preface).

This book is a study of land and labour use in agriculture in India, China and Africa. Land and labour are the basic factors in agricultural production (including food production). Allocation of these two is mainly in the hands of the farm-household. Yet, says the author, there are striking differences and puzzling differences in their use. Quoting the eminent geographer Pierre



Gourou she points out "The same natural environment will result in different human landscapes when interpreted (and transformed) by traditional European peasant civilisation, by Chinese civilisation and by modern American civilization."

#### LEVEL OF TECHNIQUES

The fact that in most parts of the tropics the quality of land-use is very low is primarily the result of techniques (and of the civilization in a broader sense) and not the direct result of unfavourable physical conditions. Human choices have been influenced much more by the level of techniques than by physical conditions. But there may be significant differences in the use and productivity of land among societies at the same technological and economic level in the cultivation of identical crops such as rice in Asia.

The author believes firmly what Gourou says. She compares the various countries like China, Japan and India and points out how this is quite true. China has achieved much more by her traditional intensive farming than the other countries in Asia which adopted modern foreign farm-technologies including what is generally known as the "Green Revolution Technology". It is difficult to explain why farmers in some areas do not use inputs to profitable levels or why they are technically less efficient than appears feasible. In the same way it is difficult to explain why farmers in some other regions with similar conditions or even

less favourable circumstances produce more and more efficiently.

The author says that as R. Barker commented upon the reasons for the poor performance of Green Revolution Technology in Asia the maximum output possible depends upon the total environment. The critical factors and constraints that prevent the farmers from applying the necessary inputs in the required manner and quantity may differ from area to area, farm to farm and time to time. If, so, the measure and definition of technical efficiency is unique for each farmer. The problem is to identify the cause of technical inefficiency in each case and suggest appropriate solution.

The more difficult problem is a larger and yet unsolved one viz. "*If and how millions of individual peasants can be persuaded to make similar and predictable changes in long established beliefs and perceptions of costs and risks.*" (page. 7). This has been pointed out for years and by many, as for example by Minoo Masani in his *Our India*.

Improvements of simple crop management practices such as increased plant density, proper plant-spacing, use of good seeds, seed treatment, proper tilling etc. proved to be sources of immediate gains in South Asia (World development Report 1978).

#### CHINA & INDIA

Comparing China and India the author says that China never gave up its traditional inputs and methods of agriculture. It was only in the mid sixties that the Chinese Government began

to provide chemical fertilizers. Till the fifties the emphasis was on further intensifying the utilisation of natural fertilisers like farmyard fertilisers. Even when the chemical fertilisers were promoted the importance of organic manures was not reduced in China. But in India even in the second plan (1956-61) chemical fertilisers had overtaken farmyard manure in importance and priority. But the response to chemical fertilisers was slow due to high cost etc. But by mid 1960s the advent of high-yielding varieties of rice and wheat resulted in a new-high-pay-off input strategy and the chemical fertiliser came to be widely sought causing the virtual demise of programmes to promote the use of farmyard compost. In effect, whatever was modern was accepted and used and the traditional was declared as of no use. It was stated that traditional seeds and manures do not give a dramatic increase in yields. The modern "chemical fertiliser scored completely over the traditional "manure", says Kusum Nair, (p. 23) "There was no ambiguity about the choice."

Thereafter, she goes on to point out that despite the hike in oil prices and shortages of oil, India stuck to its choice. Similarly, mechanical means and weedicides were advised to be used for controlling weeds.

Like Schumacher in his *Small is Beautiful* Kusum Nair pleads for adopting a technology which would utilise our own traditional inputs more and in a better way. She points out that China has



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achieved very good results by using chemical fertilisers to supplement traditional manure, at the same time using technology to improve the traditional farming practices. *Let not anything be adopted supplanting the old methods.* Let us use the traditional one and adopt appropriate technology without borrowing outright and what is new (to us) from outside. This does not mean that she wants only the old ones. The traditional inputs and practices have to be and should be improved and the improvement of farm management should be achieved. Careful cultivation, heavy manuring and local selection of techniques and seeds are all capable of raising yields, "without reliance on the much touted green revolution technologies" (This is what is stated inside the jacket of the book).

#### PARTICIPATION OF FARMERS

The author rightly says that for success in agricultural development it is necessary to develop techniques with the participation of the farmers themselves. In addition, these techniques would have to be appropriate in relation to factor endowment, resources (including national resources) customary, cultural and work practices and institutions governing the use of land and labour in the community. No right-thinking person will disagree with her.

This book is realistic and gives sensible advice. Will this advice be heeded? If it is, it would mean a lot to the Indian peasant and Indian agriculture. There is no harm in using modern techniques, but before that or along with it

let us use what we have with us effectively so long as it can be done (& it can be certainly done) without undue increase in costs. As the author says in the chapter captioned "Conclusion" the low income countries will face financial ruin if in their anxiety to achieve a rapid rate of agricultu-

ral growth by "modern" methods they become trapped in the "technology treadmill" (p. 111).

*M. Gopalakrishnan is Secretary of Agriculture, Andhra Pradesh and S.Y. Govindarajan is member of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service.*

## Books Received

(A brief notice here does not preclude a detailed review later on)

M.N. Dvivedi. *The Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali*. Sri Satguru Publications, 1983. xxiii+136 p. Rs. 50.

Reprint of a book published at the end of the 19th century.

Birla Institute of Scientific Research, Economic Research Division. *Self-Reliance and Security*. Radiant Publishers. 1984. xxiii+229p. Rs. 125.

A pioneering book dealing with the role of defence production both in safeguarding security and promoting self-reliance. It also covers R&D aspects in regard to aerospace, electronics including computers, laser, materials, nuclear and associated technologies.

A.K. Singh. *Tribal Development In India*. Amar Prakashan. 1984. iii+160p. Rs. 75.

An analytical study of approaches to tribal development in

the context of development the country as a whole. Based on some field work.

Angela Burr. *I Am Not My Book*. Vikas. 1984. viii+301 p. Rs. 15.

A study of the International Hare Krishna Sect in terms of its 'resistance through ritual' and a social protest movement of the youth.

Arvind Krishna Mehrotra. *Midnight Earth*. Oxford, 1984. 54p. Rs. 15.

A new volume by one of the important poets writing in English in India.

T. Krishnan Nair. *Social Welfare Manpower*. Concept Publishing Co. 1983. x+200p. Rs. 50. \$10.

A detailed study of social welfare manpower planning in Tamilnadu, a state which has initiated numerous innovative welfare measures.



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- EDUCATION OF THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT: IMPLICATIONS OF HEMISPHERIC SPECIALIZATION**  
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A Minority Cause

Perspectives on Bhabani  
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# Indian Book Chronicle

Vol. IX, No. 16, August 16, 1984

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## A Minority Cause

Jayanta Mahapatra is one of the leading Indian poets writing in English today. Perhaps he is the best gifted as well as the most evocative of them. I have never met him. All that I know is that he teaches Physics in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack and writes beautiful poetry in English. Only off and on we have corresponded with each other.

For some years now he has published a magazine entitled 'Chandrabhaga' (Tinkonia Bagicha, Cuttack-753001). It is sub-titled as a magazine of new writing. The latest issue (No. 11) runs to 74 pages and carries some excellent writing. Except for one story, the rest is all poetry and fairly good poetry it is. Poetry in any case is not a very salable commodity. The best medium of circulation for any kind of poetry is a journal. Jayant has been rash enough to launch one and after a few years he has had to confess that this is more than he can cope with. In a personal letter which he has written to me he says:-

"This is a cry of distress. Please forgive me for piling my burdens on you, but I do need your help. You have always given patient hearing/published/supported magazines in bad shape. And I'd like to ask you for help.

Chandrabhaga has just published its 11th issue. With the number of submissions increasing day to day, it is painful to see the number of subscriptions going down. How can I possibly run a journal like *Chandrabhaga* without adequate subscriber lists?... And with no advertisements, I just can't see any way out of this impasse."

This is a personal letter and, properly speaking, I have no right to share this letter with our readers. But there are two reasons why I have decided to do so. One is to call attention to the situation of a minority cause in the kind of society in which we operate. A minority cause, more or less by definition, is one which is championed by a small minority. This is not to suggest that the cause is not worthwhile. Only the number of people who subscribe to it is small. One could carry the argument further and say that if the cause does not receive the kind of support which would enable it to thrive, the least that can be done is not to permit it to die and yet this is precisely what is happening.

Why is *Chandrabhaga* unable to attract more subscribers? It is not for lack of good quality. It is for lack of support. Support

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even by those people who believe in the minority cause is ineffective; they are not organised enough to be able to help. And why they are not organised is not all that difficult to understand. Poets and academics are seldom well organised. That apart, they are individualists in terms of their make-up. For them to come together is more or less to go against their own grain.

Yet the fact of the matter is that unless they band together and do help the minority cause, there is no future for such causes. Such causes must survive; indeed they must also thrive. Only one or two magazines representing minority causes have managed to sustain themselves over the years. Fortunately either those who have brought them out or some others connected with them have had some kind of business acumen and they have managed to carry on for a certain length of time. But almost all magazines are subject to early fatality.

Usually it is an individual who sponsors them and carries them through as long as he can manage to do it. Once those individuals are gone those magazines fold up. Of this inevitable fate there should be no doubt. But a large number of supporters should rally to the cause. It is then alone that a sponsor would be able to carry on. To conclude therefore, this is a call to all those who are supporting the IBC whether subscribers or advertisers, to rally to the support of Jayant and of Chandrabhaga. I hope at least some of them will respond. This is the sole justification for my having quoted from Jayant's personal letter addressed to me.

Jayant, if you are offended with me for having shared a personal confidence with a group of people whom you and I do not know, kindly forgive me. In addition to this apology I am also writing to you privately but one important reason why I have chosen to 'betray' your confidence is because I too am in the

same boat; this is my second reason for quoting from your letter. By the end of this year this journal would have completed nine years of service to the Indian academic community. Even those who have reviewed in this journal and whose books have been reviewed have not always chosen to cooperate. But somehow I have managed to carry on—so far. I did not intend to be personal and talk about myself. All these years I have not done so. But this is an occasion when I feel I should cast off my sense of reticence, at least for once. This journal was started to help an intellectual community to grow in the country. It is far from achieving this objective. But then it has been some satisfaction to have suffered and slaved for the cause. Jayant, I wish you all luck. What is more, in my own limited way, apart from whatever I have said publicly, I also expect to respond to this cry of distress.

Amrik Singh

## Perspectives on Bhabani Bhattacharya

Ramesh Srivastava, Editor

**Perspectives on Bhabani Bhattacharya**

pp. 251, Vimal Prakashan, 1982, Rs. 80.00.

Reviewed by T. Vijay Kumar

Since three full length studies are already published on Bhabani Bhattacharya, when one takes up another book on him one expects something new. The present volume is disappointing not only on this count but also on various others.

The volume consists, apart from

the thirty page long introduction by the editor, of seventeen essays and an interview with the writer. The contributors include both Western and Indian critics, two of whom Dorothy Blair Shimer and K.K. Sharma—have published monographs on Bhattacharya.

K.R. Chandrashtkharan the author of the third and more critical monograph on the writer conspicuous by his absence.

Srivastava's introduction provides a detailed account of Bhattacharya's life and works,



major concerns and the recurring motifs and narrative techniques of his novels. It is quite evident that Srivastava greatly admires Bhattacharya and his work. But this admiration shouldn't have led him, as it does, to dismiss everything the writer has not attempted in his writings as "insignificant". While approving Bhattacharya's novels of social realism, Srivastava rejects the psychological novel on the ground that "the exploration of the inner recesses of mind can be artistically great but is *socially insignificant*." He chooses to ignore the fact that literary modes do not exist in binary opposition and that no technique is per se superior. He justifies the techniques of Bhattacharya by establishing a naive relationship between narrative technique and thematic concern: "What makes Bhattacharya's narrative technique so plain and simple ... is his concern for the presentation of social reality."

## SIMPLISTIC

In his enthusiasm to organize Bhattacharya's comments and views into a critical theory, Srivastava often makes simplistic and prescriptive statements. For example, about realistic characters he writes: "after encountering a character in a novel if the reader exclaims 'How like me' or 'How like my friend' then the novelist has succeeded in the creation of realistic characters." Is personal resemblance the critical criterion to decide the 'reality' of fictional characters? Commenting on Bhattacharya's view that "A novelist may well be concerned

with today...", Srivastava concludes, with disconcerting finality. "Allowing dust to settle down *would not* do for the artist; it often blurs the sharpness of reality." If this be true, how does one account for writers, like Tolstoy, whose novels deal with historical events and still retain the "sharpness of reality?" However, Srivastava is right when he points out that Bhattacharya's characters fall into two neat categories and that contrast is employed in the novels as a handy device for characterization. One might add that often the contrasts are predictable and sim-

plistic like the contrast between bad rich and good poor or between rigid traditional and liberal modern etc.

While for Srivastava, Bhattacharya is the builder or "literary bridges that span two sets of contrary views." for Cromwell Crowford Bhattacharya is "more than builder of bridges; he himself is the bridge." In his essay "Bhabani Bhattacharya: A Mediating Man," Crowford writes that Bhattacharya the man and Bhattacharya the writer are not different from each other and "what he (Bhattacharya) embodies as a man is the final legitimation of his writ-

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ings." This is a rather doubtful touch-stone to apply to literature but the focus of Crawford's essay is not on Bhattacharya's work but on the writer himself. Crawford notes that "In the three years Bhattacharya spent in Honolulu, I perceived a certain expansion of heart and mind," which gets reflected in *A Dream in Hawaii*. The three major influences were Hawaii, East-West Center, and the University of Hawaii. Crawford calls Bhattacharya "A Mediating Man" for being "a multi-cultural person uniquely equipped to mediate between several groups in a culturally diverse world," and for straddling the national and international bridges through his "exquisite but hard-hitting stories." Both reasons are flimsy and not by any means unique. Crawford even tries to validate his argument by tracing Bhattacharya's lineage as a mediating man to Rammohan Roy.

Like most essays dealing with the writer rather than his work, Crawford's essay is highly impressionistic and lacks critical viewpoint. Crawford's views on Bhattacharya are based on his observation of the writer when he was in Hawaii and are heavily influenced by his own intense love and admiration for Hawaii. At times the essay reads much like a tourist brochure on Hawaii, its "golden beaches, golden people" etc.

#### TWO PHASES

Dorothy Shimer in her article "Gandhian Influences on Bhabani Bhattacharya," traces two distinct phases in Bhattacharya's writing career. She points out that Gan-

dhi though a major influence is not the only influence on Bhattacharya and he in fact put Gandhi after Tagore in the early stages of his career. Thus Bhattacharya's first three novels belong to the Tagore phase and have analogies with Tagore's play *Bisarjan*, while the two later novels *A Goddess Named Gol* and *Shadow from Ladakh* are replete with Gandhian influences. This perhaps was an inevitable outcome of Bhattacharya's dilemma whether he should join Gandhi in his political response or follow his natural bent for writing. Bhattacharya claims that Tagore's example convinced him that his contribution is better made through writing: "Social activism he would leave to Gandhi, while he would follow more closely the course pursued by Tagore....." Perhaps, the dichotomy was not as great as it is made out to be. There are examples—like that of Bharati—which suggest the possibility of a synthesis. Gandhi himself held that political freedom is meaningless unless there is a concomitant social change and he viewed writers as capable of ushering in this change.

P. P. Sharma takes up a similar dichotomy in his essay "Bhabani Bhattacharya: Artist/Propagandist?" Sharma feels that though Bhattacharya's novels contain the very elements which are the stuff of propaganda, an equipoise is achieved through use of various "artistic controls"—like fair mindedness; humour, allegory, symbolism, language, experiments etc. But despite the 'artistic' controls if the novels still seem propagandistic it is not because of the mere "presence of

ideas, social, ethical and other as Sharma would have us believe but because of the way these ideas are presented. For example Kalo's relatively easy transition into a Brahmin in *He Who Rides A Tiger*. The question here is not whether he is successful or not in his role but whether an individual belonging to a particular caste, from which his identity is derived, would willingly change it for another—be it higher. Moreover, if Kalo has to masquerade as a holy man it was not necessary for him to pose as a Brahmin. After all, holy men in India are respected not for being Brahmins. Evidently, the various "artistic controls" often fail to check the propagandistic strain in Bhattacharya's novels.

While most critics consider Bhattacharya's concern with contemporary social and political issues to be his strength, Jasbir Jain finds the central focus of his novels to be "on the truth of an individual being and all social and political issues are peripheral to the central truth." In her essay "The Human Dimensions of Stasis and Growth", she analyses the novels of Bhattacharya and draws our attention to the movement of the central figures from a narrow, static vision to a wider, integral one. Her conclusion reasserts that "Bhattacharya's novels are essentially about the making of a man—about the need to be honest to one's inner being." Her argument is rather unconvincing because in Bhattacharya's novels social and political issues are "peripheral" but often decide "the truth of an individual being." Bhattacharya's novels also lack the technique to portray the



conflict of man "to be honest to his inner being."

#### SITA-SAVITRI IMAGE

Almost all women characters in Bhattacharya's novels are so passive, 'flat' and archetypal that one wonders if his idea of ideal woman is not the sacrificing and selfless woman who upholds the Sita-Savitri image. Bhattacharya admits that perhaps he has "overly idealized the Indian woman and power." Thus it surprises one when Marlene Fisher considers the women characters in Bhattacharya's novels as exemplifying "to a greater or lesser degree the ancient Hindu concept of Shakti." All the characters she cites as examples, exist in the novels only as instruments of the male protagonists' regeneration or self-discovery. The role of the women characters is merely to provide inspiration and strength to the male characters and thus does not deserve an identification with the dynamic Shakti image. One character, Laxmi in *A Goddess Named Gold*, who differs from other women in her refusal to accept her fate quietly, finds no mention in Fisher's essay. Even Kalinnikova, on the other hand writes that "in the gallery of female characters created by Bhattacharya, Laxmi distinguishes herself with a strong consistent character." She also points out that while portraying Laxmi "the writer strove to create not so much a realistic character of a woman of new India, as to enshrine in it his own ideal." One is not very sure that Laxmi is Bhattacharya's idea of an ideal woman. In fact, slightly unconventional characters like Mohini are forced to

accept their fate not so much by the exigencies of the plot as by their creator's belief in the virtue of submission.

Bhattacharya is among the few Indo-Anglian writers who experimented with the English language to make it more suitable to their needs. R.K. Srivastava highlights this aspect of Bhattacharya's writing in his essay "Bhattacharya's Prose Style." He finds Bhattacharya's experiments with language akin to those of Mulk Raj Anand though the points of similarity—thinking in mother tongue and then literally translating it into English; changing the syntax of English to make it more Indian; translation of native phrases and proverbs into English etc.—are applicable to Raja Rao also. H.S. Boparai also notes the similarity between the styles of Anand and Bhattacharya. In his essay "The Achievement of Bhabani Bhattacharya", he writes: "Narayan did not make experimentation with style. He took to what some critics call 'clean' English ... though the Indianness of his English is quite obvious. Raja Rao was praised for breaking the syntax of the English language... It was mainly Anand who bore the brunt of criticism and to a lesser degree Bhattacharya." If Narayan could project 'Indianness' even while using 'clean' English, what prompted other writers to experiment with English? And why was Raja Rao praised and Anand and Bhattacharya criticised for doing essentially the same thing. Boparai doesn't answer or even raise such questions. Instead, he attributes prejudice and chauvinism to the critics of Bhattacharya and Anand: "What would

look a mole in a Joyce to a friendly eye is made to look a mountain in a Bhattacharya or an Anand."

Srivastava explains the absence of comedy in the novels of Bhattacharya as being the result of his choice of mode. He feels that while Narayan can afford to employ a comic tone as he "has no commitment" to any cause other than entertainment, Bhattacharya can not because he is "a social realist, and a predominant comic tone might have injured the seriousness of his objective." Srivastava, obviously, presumes that novels employing a comic tone are not realistic and are devoid of commitment. One wonders whether Srivastava is not looking for comedy in the events of the novel rather than in the vision of the writer. Boparai, though he contradicts Srivastava, is more convincing. He feels that by following the dictum 'All's well that ends well' in almost all his novels, "Bhattacharya has ideologically embraced the comic vision rather than the tragic. Hence it is more natural to find the comic spirit dominant in his novels."

The use of compound expressions like well-water, picture-show in Bhattacharya's novels, according to Srivastava, "sound peculiar to our ears, as we are not used to them though they have their originals in the regional languages." (All emphases added). Srivastava seems to have only the monolingual anglicised Indians and the foreigners in his mind as the prospective readers of his essay. He insists that vernacular words and words like phut-phutti should be italicized and annotated to save the reader from getting confused whether "these words



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belong to English or some other language." He feels that Bhattacharya should have preferred English equivalents to words like *apsara*, *kabiraj* etc. Throughout his essay Srivastava takes it for granted that his readers would not know the regional languages and would need the help of italicization and annotation to distinguish and appreciate common Indian words like *apsara* and *phut-phutti*.

Srivastava's choice of quotations is rather inappropriate. For example, he chooses the following quotation from *Music for Mohini* to support his view that through the use of metaphorical dialogues Brattacharya transports into English the distilled wisdom contained in the proverbs and sayings of the Indian languages: "You will brighten another house, child. What use is a lamp, golden and filled with oil, if it has no wick? The house is the lamp, man is like oil, the woman is the wick Mohini: and happiness the living flame." Srivastava seems unaware

of the fact that when a metaphor or a proverb is used in an Indian language it is used as a substitute for plain speech and not as its complementary. Thus the explanation "The house is the lamp..." in the above quotation is superfluous and points out the drawback and not the strength of Bhattacharya's prose style.

The volume fails to add anything new to our critical perspective on Bhattacharya's work. Most of the essays lack incisive critical probing and are thus tiring in their smug quality. The pretentious nature of the book is foreboded in the editor's remarks in the preface; "I have ventured to cast my net deep and wide, with the result that the catch is prolific yet of high quality." After all, it is the reader who is the ultimate judge of a book's quality and not the editor.

T. Vijay Kumar lectures in English at New Science College Hyderabad.

that the basic purpose of universities is the unending search for truth and pursuit of new knowledge. But in a welfare oriented society, more important than this purpose is the one that universities must bring about a rapid improvement in the standard of living of the people by laying the foundations of a scientific and technological society. It is in such a meaningful sense that the semester system of education can become the harbinger of societal change, progress and prosperity.

#### NATURE & SUBSTANCE

The monograph purports to look into the nature, structure and substance of the semester system, its merits and defects, relevance and significance in a period of transition of the Indian society from a traditional set up to modernity. It has chapters on (i) Philosophy of the Semester System; (ii) Features of the Ideal Semester System; (iii) Grading System; (iv) Question Banks; (v) Relevance of the Semester System; and (vi) Summing up. But it leaves some gaps, besides the discussion being repetitive at points. Semesterization has been debated in India for over two decades, is doing well in some institutions and not so well in others. The university community now expects from such a publication a survey of the Indian experience with an analysis of where it failed or succeeded and why the system cannot be equally successful in all universities. But the author has avoided this by making the discussion purely theoretical.

The author is, of course, clear that semesterization is a restructuring

## The Semester System

V.T. Patil

The Semester System— Substance and Problems  
pp. 76, Sterling, Rs. 50.00.

Reviewed by H.S. Singha

It may be axiomatic to say that many improvements are needed in tertiary education in India. But it would be naive to suggest that the semester system although an improvement in itself, is the be-all and end-all of everything. By its very nature a monograph on semester system written by a staunch advocate is bound to suffer

from this oversimplification. This view is confirmed on going through *The Semester System* by V.T. Patil. He regards it as a panacea and goes to the extent of asserting "Our universities suffer from an ivory tower mentality and hence do not come to grips with the socio-economic problems of the country. It is true



turing of university courses. What is important is that it is also a style of teaching and learning. But this style is a function of the nature of the university on the one hand and the nature of society it is supposed to serve on the other. Therefore the philosophy of the semester system must answer the question whether the Indian society with its rigid stratification characterized by authoritarianism and a value system as it exists today is suitable for semesterization. It must also answer the question whether affiliating universities with little or no control over what happens in the classrooms of affiliated colleges—most of them being of indifferent standards and with no tradition of scientific humanism and free thinking—are fit for its introduction. These issues have not been probed.

If we do not consider these phi-

losophical questions, we end up reducing the semester to a change in the examination system. The space devoted to issues like grading system and question banking unwittingly gives that impression although the author asserts that "the introduction of the semester should not be considered narrowly as a mere examination reform".

Nevertheless, the author seems to have the courage of conviction and with his lucid style has succeeded in making a significant contribution to the ongoing debate on semesterization in Indian universities. There is much food for thought in this monograph for every university and college teacher.

*H.S. Singha is Principal of G. H.P. School, New Delhi & author of a recently published book on Examinations.*

transform sordid realities of death, defeat and sexual perversion into grim tableaux. There is no sequential narrative, nothing is resolved at the end (indeed I had a sense of being let down by the ending in which the tensions built in the book are suddenly relieved in a manner that certainly takes away some of the force of the book).

The disembodied narrative eye (disembodied because the hero-narrator hovers in the book more as a spirit than as a person), lights on isolated scenes and vignettes, records them, is revolted by them and remains permanently detached from the world that comes into view. The fantasy mode in which the novel is cast differs from the fantasy of experimentalist writers in that the fantasizing is done by an ordinary dreamer and illusionist, the protagonist himself. In fact one of the charms of this book is that it involves readers into its drama of reality and illusion without being too demanding or arcane.

#### AN EPICENTRE

The novel hasn't a plot in the ordinary sense. It has an epicentre instead. This is the psychological moment when the hero's latent jealousy is aroused and registers a shock: it is through this moment that this book emerges, bringing to our attention tremors and undercurrents of chaotic disorder that stay quiescent behind the charades of polite behaviour and decorous civility. By the time the book ends we see ourselves through Kumar's characters, stripped to the skin without pretence, naked before God.

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## The Imperatives of Life

Shiv K. Kumar

*Nude Before God*

pp. 187, The Vanguard Press, (New York), Distributors: Allied, New Delhi, 1983, Price not given.

Reviewed by M.L. Raina

There is a curious aura about this novel by a poet of substantial talent. Unlike *The Bone's Prayer*, Kumar's only other novel to date, we have here something much more than a story of lust, rapine and waste, and that 'something' is largely derived from the aura I mentioned before. You feel it between the lines, you sense it lingering over events and incidents, in the quality of the

author's perception and in the subtle but touchingly manifest concern with which the underside of our daily lives is probed to reveal darkness and shadows.

In *Nude Before God* Kumar never allows that darkness and those shadows to grow more frightening than they really are, for the poetic filiations and the sparsities of the narrative style are skilfully brought into play to



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The sight is not too comforting. We are shown to be nothing but rapacious predators thriving on each other through a dog-eat-dog code of social deportment.

Ram Krishna, painter of nudes, lover, husband and man of the world is beset by a fear that his wife has betrayed him with another man and this fear generates delusions including that of his death. Kumar's purpose in this book is not to analyse the psyche that causes the fear but to use it as a starting point to explore the degeneration of middle-class society driven by rampant materialism and greed. His treatment reminds one of Jhabvala of *An Experience of India* or of the most recent *In Search of Love and Beauty* (I have been reading the latest Jhabvala along with *Nude*). There is the same scalpel-like handling of the sores of society, the same fastidiousness and clam with which layers of pretence are peeled to reveal raw sexuality and raucous desire blinding human beings to finer instincts of love and humane judgement.

Only Kumar's allusiveness and roving vision provides a frame of reference bigger than the small, narrow world of his characters. There is also the fact that the poet in Kumar manages to disperse compassion into his stark pictures of depravity, a compassion which Jhabvala, given the rough-and-ready nature of her milieu, does not need. And yet, Kumar's exposures are no less wounding. Each of his characters is haunted—Ram Krishna, his wife, Deshpande, Rezia, Babar the nawab, and Pratima. To cheat

their primal insecurity they resort to subterfuges. These vary from what the 'spirited' protagonist sees as his wife's ritual obeisance to funeral rules before taking off with her lover, to Rezia's desperate attempts to create a genuine love relationship with Krishna in the face of her father's and her brother's incestuous designs on her.

#### DEATH & LOVE

Death and love are the two involvements through which the author tests, literally tests, the character's reality of being. Death itself has many forms: real death, as of the protagonist himself which brings out the worst in his friends and rivals, and death-in-life in which many of the characters clothe themselves before the final unrobing of their falsities. Similarly love: the mock sentimentality of Pratima, the formal cold concern of the 'faithless' wife, the need for bodily contact that Rezia craves and the selfless love shown by Krishna's parents at the time of his imagined death. That all these people, except perhaps the parents, are busy posturing, is a telling indictment of our genteel middle-class life-style which we have internalized to such an extent that it has come to seem natural and inevitable.

No relationship in the novel escapes the ferocity brought on by scheming and wordly ambition. No relationship escapes being perverted by a constant reminder that at heart we are cruel and ruthless to the point of insanity. Nowhere is this better illustrated

than in Chapter 10, in which Babar advances on his sister reeking with lust and ready to seduce her. Similarly Ram Krishna's sudden bout of jealousy which precipitates the novel, brings out in grotesque detail the tremors of marauding instinct ready to knock out the tenderness and beauty of love.

*Nude Before God* is allusive and makes frequent generalisation about human failure. The dialogue between the God of Death and the spirit of the painter of nudes introduces a speculative dimension into the story of lust and corruption. I think Kumar's use of the device as well as his references to the Gita and other sources make for a daring intervention and a kind of legerdemain to see everyday reality under the aegis of ultimate concerns. Since both Yama and the protagonist are spirits, they permeate the story as an aura suffusing events and characters and intimating connections other than purely quotidian. The dialogue provides what George Eliot in another context called the 'slow gaze' to oversee all. Kumar successfully sustains this overseeing eye, so much so that we ourselves are compelled to assess Kumar's world in terms of his own valuations.

Kumar's novel presents a reality which is too harsh for comfort though we are allowed access to this reality not as a continuing process of involvement and detachment but as observer-participant of a tableau. This is a reality which, as George Eliot would have said, "no sense of beauty, beams and no humour twinkles



a disorienting reality without redemption. I think the principal strength of this novel lies in its uncompromising avowal of the difficult and inconsolable imperatives of life. This is also the strength of all powerful novels.

Shiv K. Kumar may well be the 'safak Masiha' of Faiz Ahmad Faiz's memorable lines.

M.L. Raina is Professor of English at Punjab University, Chandigarh.

such sages are largely fictional, the word saga is sometimes used interchangeably with myth.

#### SCIENTIFIC STUDY

The scientific study of mythology—myths proper and later legends and folktales—began in the 19th century. But already in the 6th century B.C. Greek thinkers had begun to look myths critically. The Greek poets Homer (the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*) and Hesiod (*Theogony* and *Works and Days*) portrayed the world of gods and the participation of the gods in the affairs of human beings. Towards the end of the 6th century B.C. Theagenes of Rhegium began to enquire into the historicity of Homer's epics. Xenophanes criticised the anthropomorphism of the gods in the epics and rejected the Homeric description of the gods as capable of moving about from place to place at will. He also rejected the 'immorality' of the gods—adultery, stealing, deceiving each other—which men would consider disgraceful. Later, about 300 B.C., Euhemerus developed a theory that the gods described in the myths had originally been kings and conquerors who were venerated and worshipped and apotheosised. Plato (in the *Republic*) criticised the way in which the poets had presented the gods.

But the Greeks knew only their own myths. The "discovery" of other ancient cultures, the growth of the science of anthropology, and the development of archaeological and linguistic studies opened up a rich and vast world of myth and folklore. The work of explo-

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## Scholarly

Udai Prakash Arora

### Motifs in Indian Mythology: Their Greek and Other Parallels

pp. 248 including index, Indika Publishing House, New Delhi, Rs. 98.00.

Reviewed by Samuel Mathai

What is "myth"? The Greek word (muthos) originally had meanings ranging from "a slight saying, to a word, speech, tale." Later it came to mean a fable, a fanciful story that 'explains' a natural phenomenon, or a social practice or belief, or a religious ritual. In the 19th century when myths were studied by linguists, anthropologists and historians the word was used to describe primitive beliefs about the origin of the world, and included traditional tales about gods and demons, and ancient heroes and battles long ago. In popular usage a myth is any invented story that has little or no basis in fact, and is almost equivalent to the Sanskrit word *Mithya* which means untruth or illusion. Mythology is the study of myths or the myths of a people or region collectively. Thus we speak of Indian mythology or Greek mythology.

Today we include in the term 'mythology' not only the primitive stories about the origins of 'heaven and earth', the creation of the elements of water and fire,

and the beginnings of life, but also traditional tales about gods and demigods, prehistoric human heroes. Strictly speaking, we should distinguish between creation myths, legends, sagas, folktales (marchen) and fairy tales. Legends are usually stories about heroes and heroic deeds—like the Trojan war or the Mahabharata war. A legend properly is a tale coming down from the past and forming part of a corpus of such traditional stories. The word legend comes from a root which meant 'to tell', 'to gather, collect', and then 'to read'. Legends belong to a later stage in human history than the creation myths, and are found in collections. They may deal with kings and heroes or with saints and holy men. Folktales are similar to legends: they are typically anonymous and timeless. Saga properly is a prose narrative dealing with prominent persons and events in the heroic age of Norway and Iceland; but the word is now used in the sense of any long series of stories about a people or tribe or family. As



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urers and missionaries made available to the student of primitive cultures a great deal of hitherto unknown material about the beliefs and practices of early man in different parts of the world. One of the remarkable facts about the mythologies of various peoples is that many of the themes and motifs are common to most of them. The earliest myths are about "beginnings" and the creation of birth of the universe. Then there are myths about the sun and the moon—solar and lunar myths; myths about the seasons and fertility in the animal and the vegetable world. How myths originate is difficult to tell, and there is no unanimity among scholars on this subject. Max Muller after his study of Indian "scriptures" thought that mythology is the result of "a disease of language." He believed that the confusion of names—many names for one object and the same name for many objects—and the existence of grammatical gender which led to the personification of the gods, were the source of myths. The Indo-Aryans built their myths round the sun, the dawn and the sky. Max Muller's views were ridiculed by other students of mythology who held that myth is the reflection of celestial phenomena, especially the movements of the sun and the moon. The renewed interest in Babylonian or Mesopotamian mythology led to lunar myths being given more importance than the solar myths of the Aryans.

The growing collection of mythological material from different parts of the world gave rise to other approaches to the study of

myths. Writers like Sir James Frazer (*The Golden Bough*) believed that myths were the outcome of ritual magic. The periodic "death" and "resurrection" of vegetation suggested the idea of a dying god like Adonis or Oriris.

#### PARALLELS

In *Motifs in Indian Mythology* Uday Prakash Arora shows us that many of the motifs and basic themes in Indian mythology and the ancient legends and folktales of India have parallels in Greek and other mythologies. Myths about the creation of the world, the four ages (*yugas*), the great flood, etc., are found in many other cultures. Stories about the birth and death of legendary characters (e.g., Karna, Krishna, the Pandavas, Rama, Sita, Sakuntala) are also found in Greek and other traditions. Belief in metamorphosis, supernatural maidens, and magical happenings, is common to Indian and other mythologies.

When there is so much in common in the mythologies of different people the questions that naturally arise in our minds are: Do all the myths of mankind have a common source? Do the similarities of motifs indicate ancient historic relationship among the now widely separated people? Do these common phantasies of the infancy of the human race indicate the "psychic unity" of man or the universality of much human experience? To these and many other questions that naturally come to our minds no simple or definite answer can be given. Arora does not attempt to propound any

theory of origins. He concludes his book by saying:

"To sum up, the study of Indian myths and legends reveal the diverse elements, both indigenous and foreign, which have developed the Indian society. Many of the legends which Indian mythology shares with other nations of the world are explainable by a simple fact of the similar response of human mind everywhere, but this is also definite that Indian mythology borrowed certain motifs. As various aspects of the life of the people influence, similarly the myths and legends were also influenced from foreign elements."

*Motifs in Indian Mythology* is a well-documented and scholarly work. In an appendix Arora has tabulated thirty-nine main legends, the motifs contained in them, the sources in Indian literature of these motifs, and the parallels noted in the book from mythologies. The bibliography appended to the book indicates the vast literature on the subject of mythology and Arora's own wide reading. It is however regrettable that the book is full of errors for which the author and the printer are equally responsible. It must be hoped that a revised and corrected version of this work will be published soon so that it can be read with pleasure and profit both by scholars in the field and by general readers.

Samuel Mathai retired as Vice Chancellor of the University of Kerala and now lives in Trivandrum.



# The Indianization of English

Braj B. Kachru

The Indianization of English: The English Language in India

pp. xiii+280, Oxford University Press, 1983, Rs. 100.00.

Reviewed by R.N. Srivastava

English was transplanted in many parts of South Asia and Africa by settlement and colonial administration. In its initial phase it served as a *foreign* language and was thus used for the purpose of absorbing the culture of the dominant British people. Because it served as a foreign language, it was neither considered to be one's own language by even those people who had a very good command over it nor its norm of use and usage was ever shifted from England to these countries. English was then looked upon as an 'alien' language employed by European gentlemen of talent and education. It was after almost one and a half-centuries of its serving that in India English transformed its role from a foreign language to a *second* language.

This shift in role and functionality has been gradual, and secondly its cause was equally promoted by foreign missionaries, English rulers and prominent intellectuals of India such as Raja Rammohan Roy, R.H. Navalkar etc. By the second decade of the present century, English got accepted as the language of the elite intellectuals and of the administration and the press. As a second language it gained deeper roots in society to the extent that it was this very language which became the primary medium of expression for voicing the anti-

English feeling during our national movement.

## TRANSFORMATION

When a language changes its role from a foreign to a second language, certain attitudinal and behavioural changes also take place in its users. For example, till a language functions as a foreign language, it is never perceived as its own, even though its users may have a good competence in it. A second language is perceived by its users as their own though it is usually not the first to be acquired. Secondly, while a foreign language is meant to express an 'alien' culture, a second language is employed to absorb and express a culture of one's own. The change in the shift can be seen well in the goal and perspective set for learning English in the Indian context by Raja Rammohan Roy and Raja Roy. For Roy, English served as an instrumental measure for acquiring the useful knowledge of the West which the natives of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world.....' On the other hand, Raja Rao conceives of English as an alternative way of expressing a culture of one's own. According to him, '...we shall have the English language with us and amongst us, and not as guest or friend, but as one of our own, of

our caste, our creed, our sect and of our tradition.'

This transformation of the role from a foreign to a second language also brings linguistic changes in the code (structure and texture of a language) and sociolinguistic changes in the verbal behaviour of its users. In the context of English in India, this has been labelled by the author of this book as the Indianization of the English language. This nativization of English is not confined only to India. The author of this book has convincingly shown that this process has continued to yield *new Englishes* in other countries of South Asia, i.e., Sri Lanka and Pakistan and West Africa, as well. This, according to him, 'raises many typologically interesting theoretical and methodological problems about the descriptions of the *new Englishes*... as second or foreign languages' (p. 18).

## DISTINCT TRENDS

With the spread of English in different parts of the world, two distinct trends appear to emerge on the scene. Firstly, with the emergence of new native varieties of English (American English, Australian English, Canadian English) the norm for Standard English not only shifted from its original centre of England (i.e., British), but also in nature and reference became multimodal. Secondly, with the appearance of new non-native varieties of English (for example, Indian English, Lankan English, Filipino English, West African English), an entirely new process of norm-creation came into existence. It is to be



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remembered in this context that when a foreign language gets institutionalised as a second language, it begins to create its *own* norm of use and usage. It is this second type of norm creation process which has been kept in the book as focal point for analysis, discussion and evaluation. The language chosen is English and the context India.

English in India has been institutionalised to serve basically as a second language. Its significance gets manifested in three aspects. First, contact speakers of English in India are approximately fifty times more than their respective native speakers. Second, English covers more than one-fourth of the entire bilingual population (25.7%) while twelve other major languages share the rest of the bilingual population. Third, in spite of the fact that English is used by less than 3% of the entire population as a necessary means of communication, as pointed out by Quirk in his Foreword to this book, 'it is of course a very important fraction, inevitably comprising the entire leadership of her economic, industrial, professional, political and social life'. Further, as Quirk points out, 'Indian English...is a vitally significant language, one that commands a great deal of interest, and one whose serious study is impeded by dauntingly severe complexities of Indian English, the author of this book has achieved one of his goals—to acquaint his reader with his own way of looking at problems of non-native varieties of English—right or wrong.

#### INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

It is in the year 1961 that the

author of this volume submitted his doctoral dissertation at the University of Edinburgh on a topic related to Indian English. Since then he has been writing and publishing papers on the various linguistic aspects of Indianization of the English language in India. During the past few years, he has tried to enlarge his orbit of study by including in it the institutionalised varieties of English which have developed primarily as second languages in South Asia and other parts of the world. He has shown in fact an exemplary instance of sustained interest and undivided love for the field. His extensive research and persuasive contributions (and over and above his persistent interest) in the field has made him an indisputable authority on Indian English. This present volume is a collection of his eight articles written over a period of two decades (1961-81) with a shared theme and focus concerning processes involved in language contact and linguistic acculturation of the English language in the multilingual and pluricultural context of Indian sub-continent.

The eight studies have been arranged by Kachru in five sections. However, almost all of his papers bring before us the following three issues for our close scrutiny—(a) approaches to institutionalized non-native varieties of English, (b) nature, range and depth of nativization (linguistic acculturation) of the English language in a linguistically and culturally pluralistic context of Indian sub-continent, and (c) the pragmatics of non-native Englishes i.e., linguistic, attitudinal and functional

realism of intra-national and international Englishes. As these are vitally significant issues that command a great deal of interest in both native speakers of English language and the users of 'transplanted' Englishes alike, I will confine my discussions basically to them.

To the question related to approaches to Indian English (IE), Kachru finds six attitude-types (1) attitudinally *neutral* descriptivists, (2) attitudinally *sceptical* cynics, (3) attitudinally *norm-obsessed* purists, (4) attitudinally *positive* realists, (5) attitudinally *pedagogical* prescriptionists, and (6) attitudinally *pragmatic* functionalists. He places himself under the last category which, according to him, is free from many attitudinal sins like the sin of ethnocentrism, exhibiting language colonialism etc. (p. 235). A functional view of language use relates the structure and form of a language use relates the structure and form of a language to the situational contexts in which it is used. This brings him back to the Firthian concept of 'context of situation' and motivates him to explore how *Indianness* of IE is the manifestation of the living processes of Indians maintaining and expressing their way of life. According to Kachru, 'We might call the *Indianness* of Indian English, in the same way as we speak of the *Englishness* of British English' (p. 124). In fact following Firth, Kachru wants to attack the predominant view that 'English is the key to what is described in a common cliché as the 'British way of life'. Such a view is likely to disappear in the context of English as an international



al language.

### DEVIATIONS OR INNOVATIONS

The living processes that reflect Indian way of life result in the *newness* (non-nativeness) in English language. There are two ways of looking at them. One way is to look at them as inadequacies and imperfections (mistakes) in second language acquisition and which consequently call for immediate rejection or repair. The other way is to accept them as functional manifestations (deviations) or pragmatic needs of speech communities that employ English language for their social interaction. It is this latter view which does not consider those un-English elements which 'jar upon the ear of the native Englishman' as mistakes. As these elements are equally culture-bound and language-bound and as they are result of the nativization process real to the language and culture situation of use and usage, they can be called as 'deviations'. Kachru rightly makes a distinction between a 'deviation' and a 'mistake'; while the term 'deviation' can be viewed as context-determined, linguistic innovations, the term 'mistake' can be seen as non-productive and non-functional un-English element that creeps into verbal behavior of its users on account of imperfect learning (p. 76).

Kachru has strongly made a plea to look at these deviations as innovations. In the context of IE, it is these deviations which are markers of *Indianisms* which he has tried to exhaust under the following four categories—(1) Au-

thor specific e.g., rape-sister, salt giver (in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand), (2) Text-specific e.g., 'as honest as an elephant', 'as good as kitchen ashes', (3) Register-specific e.g., 'interdining', 'inter-marriage', and (4) Area-specific e.g., 'military hotel', 'jibba pocket'. The details of the linguistic processes characteristic of IE have given in his two articles—'Contextualization' and 'Lexical Innovations.'

The main argument of Kachru, if I understand it, is that verbal strategies in the *second* language (English) result from *transfer* and *interference* and that this transfer is inevitable. No one would like to quibble with him on this functional approach. The difficulty is fact rests with the 'frame of reference' he offers for measuring and evaluating acceptability of deviant items. These formations range from the Indian use of plural forms such as 'alphabets' or 'furnitures' and usages like 'England-returned' or 'B.A. Pass' to the grand, pompous, flamboyant, florid and stilted style or 'fawning, flattery and fustian' discourse types.

As all these are the consequences of 'transfer' and 'interference', the issue is—who is to make the judgement over their acceptability—second language users of English as such, speakers of IE or native speakers of English. Scholars have significantly drawn our attention to mismatches in judgements between these groups. For Kachru, the reference group is confined to educated Indians who are competent to use English in different registers. One can raise the question in this context—Is this reference group

homogeneous, or does it offer a range of people with different layers of competence in English? For Kachru the answer is both yes and no. The answer is 'yes' because 'the homogeneity of a speech community is an ideal to which linguists aspire, but it is not characteristic of human language' (p. 74). The answer is 'no', because in spite of variations of various types, there are several characteristics which the users of educated Indian English share' (p. 74).

### ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

The root of the problem lies firstly in the almost exclusive reliance on the category 'educated' speaker to establish value, and secondly in the belief that education brings homogeneity in response towards acceptability of linguistic items. The question is not restricted to some grey areas concerning rules of grammar, say, the Indian use of English articles. The problem is also related to the factors that shape 'values' of educated speakers. The following sentences, for example, are acceptable to some and unacceptable to other educated Indian speakers—'Time and tide waits for none' (Shakespeare) and 'The wages of sin is death' (Bible). It appears from the observation that some, though they use English, are not at all acquainted with the values that have been shaped by the tradition of native speakers; there are some who have accepted passively the valuations proposed by English scholars and there are still others who though conscious about valuation, are unable to discover the



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difference between the traditional and contemporary English. It is unfortunate that in India we are unable to evolve our own independent evaluation of the tradition of English language and literature. Kachru provides a perspective for it but unfortunately does not give us any operational tool or criteria of appropriateness.

For me another difficulty in understanding Kachru's position is because of his own claim that he is a functionalist in approach and yet for all practical purposes he believes in value evaluation like a norm-obsessed elitist. On the one hand, he talks about the cline of bilingualism to rank bilinguals in terms of their proficiency in English (as IE offers a kind of spectrum which extends from kitchen English to absolute ambilingualism), and on the other hand, he restricts the scope of IE to a group of bilinguals who he considers 'standard' (or educated) IE users. According to him, the standard IE is used by bilinguals who occupy a central point on the scale of bilingualism and who 'are able to make use of the language *effectively* in those restricted fields in which the English language is used in India' (p. 129).

Kachru's notion of standard IE raises more problems in respect of the dauntingly severe complexities of the nativization process than it solves. Firstly, it delimits the scope of IE too narrowly to the communication setting of elite middle class. Secondly, his notion of 'standard' attributes a disparaging meaning to all other varieties of English which fall below his central point on the scale of bilingualism. Thirdly, his focus on

the 'educated' variety of IE obliterates his own distinction between 'deviation' and 'mistake' as what is functional realizations in pidgin variety of IE will be judged as mistakes for his kind of English. We must realise that Kitchen English, Butler English, Babu English etc. are also linguistic realizations of pragmatic needs of its (none-elite) users in a contact situation. Not only that, they are not culture-bound codes of communication but they also have their own defined system as native varieties. Their users make use of these varieties *effectively* in their restricted fields and as they have evolved their own norm, they can be regarded as varieties of English in their own right. As Quirk *et al* maintain, these varieties have also been institutionalised and made stable and hence they are not to be treated 'as stages on their way to more native like English'.

#### ENGLISHLIZATION

Along with the process of nativization of English, Kachru has also discussed in some depth the process of *Englishization* of the native language and literature (pp 196-198, 233-234). Kachru has shown how English has initiated several changes and innovations in Hindi grammar and discourse strategy and also believes in what Gokak once said, 'It is no exaggeration to say that it was in the English class room that the Indian literary renaissance was born'. What is missing from his perspective is, that English is also by and large responsible for the truncated growth of our vernaculars. I agree more with what

Gandhiji once said: 'Knowledge of English is very necessary for us. But it is one thing to give it its due place and quite another to make fetish of it'. English has certainly been a help in modernising our languages but, at the same time, it is precisely because of the role and status of English that the languages of India have also suffered impoverishment. We have to discern the imperceptible change that is taking place on the national stage of our history—i.e., the reversal of the process that transformed the role of English from a foreign to a second language. Two main trends seem to identify the post-colonial phase of the developing nations of Africa and Asia, viz (a) an attempt to promote the unity of the polity by selection and development of a national language and (b) rediscovery of the importance of indigenous languages for equal access to education. The role and function of English in this changed perspective have to be redefined and restructured.

As the book is a collection of articles written at different stages for different readership, it is not uniform in style and presentation. The book is bound to show a certain amount of repetition and redundancy. The repetition, however, is quite in abundance; terms like 'mistakes' and 'deviations' occur with full explication at least five times (pp. 3, 76, 125, 130, 186), 'phrase mongering' also five times (pp. 39-40, 63, 137, 178, 224); the same quote appears twice (Gokak: 50, 234, Firth: 238) Whitworth: 2, 211); and examples like 'flower-bed', 'dinner-leaf' innumerable times. K



chru would have done great favour to his readers had he kept the repetitions to the minimum while revising his articles and making changes and additions.

In sum, this book contains insightful and useful information on the English language and on factors which contributed to the retention of English in pre-and post-colonial phases in India and other countries of South Asia and West Africa, but it also contains

more than its share of repetition and redundancy. Furthermore, Kachru is convincing in his analysis of various linguistic aspect of the Indianization of the English language but his elitist approach to IE is augmented by certain attitudinal sins, primarily the sin of middle-class ethnocentrism.

*R.N. Srivastava is Professor of Linguistics at the University of Delhi.*

## The Role of Sir Chhotu Ram

Prem Chowdhry

Punjab Politics: The Role of Sir Chhotu Ram  
pp. 364, Vikas, 1984, Rs. 125.00.

Reviewed by Madan G. Gandhi

The book under review is a well-documented in-depth study of the socio-economic conditions underlying the politics of Punjab during the period 1921-1947. The politics of the province was dominated by the Unionist Party with Sir Chhotu Ram as the central figure in the politics of the South East region of Punjab, now known as Haryana.

The study makes a penetrating analysis of the socio-economic conditions which went into the making of the politics of unionism, a politics of "loyalism par excellence." The study assumes and in fact explores a dialectical relationship between socio-economic substructure and the corresponding, ever changing superstructure—politics. In the best tradition of historiography, the study analyses the underlying motivations of political actors,

their activities, their political manoeuvres and factional cleavages.

### LEGENDARY FIGURE

In Haryana, especially in Rohtak District, Chhotu Ram is a legendary figure. He is revered as the friend of the downtrodden and the ruralfolk, especially the Jats. The study examines the factors and forces which contributed to the rise and eminence of Chhotu Ram in the provincial politics. Its basic thrust is that with the solid backing of the upper strata of an essentially agrarian society, as also an open and active favouritism by the British administrators, Chhotu Ram emerged as the undisputed leader of the Jats. He successfully exploited the caste idiom to build for himself a safe constituency in the

Jat dominated Rohtak District for over twenty years. By forging political alliance with the predominant Unionist Muslims, Chhotu Ram, with his group of Hindu rural followers, became an indispensable force to the Unionist Party, stabilising and sustaining its hold over the rural areas. It was Chhotu Ram's obscurantist mix of caste-class idiom of politics which resulted in a weakening of the Congress and the consequent tightening of the British hold on Punjab, a province of admitted economic, political and strategic importance.

The British motivations regarding the various legal measures in the field of agrarian reform and rural reconstruction usually ascribed to the indefatigable efforts of Chhotu Ram, the study proves, were actuated by and closely linked to political consideration, "as a mere matter of self-preservation" and "to take the wind out of communist and socialist sails by a progressive agricultural and labour policy." In the 1930s, for example, when as a result of the increasing danger of civil disobedience movement, mass contact decision by the Congress, low agricultural prices and bad harvest, the situation had become politically explosive for the British in India, Chhotu Ram came up with Dehat Sudhar Scheme which in reality was devised in its minutest details by the British bureaucrats as a counter to Gandhi's Gram Swaraj deemed as potentially dangerous by the Punjab Government.

### TRIUMPH OF CASTEISM

An analysis of Chhotu Ram's role from the district to the pro-



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vincial sphere highlights a definitive coorelation between the socio economic environment and political reality of the times and offers the key to an understanding of the unique political dynamics of the province. The study provides an explanation for the emergence and eventual triumph of casteism as an effective tool for socio-economic and political mobilisation. The study underlines how Chhotu Ram by making Jatism as the basis of successful political organisation, geared it for purposes of promoting Jat interests at the local level and enlarged it to encompass Zamindar interests at the provincial level. In this, the study indicates, the explicit involvement of the colonial rulers in the successful emergence of casteism as a viable political force. This not only helped the British in acquiring a political base for their rule but also in driving another wedge into Indian society by strengthening mutually antagonistic interest groups.

In retrospect, an analysis of the economic relationship in the Rohtak district between landowning Jats and other rural social strata drawn from other castes as well as from within the Jats, throws light on the deliberate attempts of Chhotu Ram and the district officials to camouflage the latent social antagonism existing within the agrarian society of the region and encouraging the Jats to maintain a separate identity from other castes.

In the given agrarian society of this region, Chhotu Ram projected Jatism on behalf of the entire caste of Jats regardless of any economic divisions. By employing a mix of caste and class

idiom i.e., projecting simultaneously the Jat and Zamindar interests, he succeeded in mobilising them behind him. In this he was greatly helped by the British administrators through direct legislative enactments starting from 1900 onwards on the one hand and through financial aid in the establishment of Jat Sabhas, educational institutions and the press, to the grant of preference to educated Jats in various government jobs on the other. The colonial rulers in their bid to promote caste politics in this region found in Chhotu Ram a willing and an unfailingly who in turn fully exploited the caste idiom to consolidate his own political base.

The study laments that the caste syndrome nurtured in this region from the early 1920s by the British officials with the very able support of caste leaders could not remain dormant for long and raised its ugly head within a year of the 1946 elections. In the wake of Haryana emerging into a separate entity

on November 1, 1966, the phenomena of caste politics was seen to touch alarming proportions leading to successive spells of political instability, rank factionalism and political turncoatism of the worst order.

The study has been conducted within a historical framework and the presentation reflects the author's analytical capacity and sound judgement. The outstanding merit of the study lies in the fact that the author has exhausted all the relevant primary sources one can think of. Written in a lucid style, the dry facts of history have come alive. With a rich bibliography and a highly informative index at the end, the book deserves to be read and reflected upon by both academics and policy makers.

Madan G. Gandhi is Professor of Political Science & Director Centre for Third World Studies & Research, M. D. University Rohtak.

## Books Received

(A brief notice here does not preclude a detailed review later on)

H.S.S. Nissanka. Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy, Vikas, pp. 401, Rs. 150.

A case study in non-alignment, this book provides a model for research into foreign affairs of developing countries. It discusses the rise of national & political consciousness & then traces developments in the

sphere of foreign affairs from Independence to the present day. Shiv R. Mehta. Rural Development Policies and Programmes: Sociological Perspective, Sage Publications, pp. 192, Rs. 95.

Using a sociological perspective, the book provides a macro level study of rural development programmes & policies in the Indian context.



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jected Jatism on behalf of the  
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any economic divisions. By em-  
ploying a mix of caste and cla  
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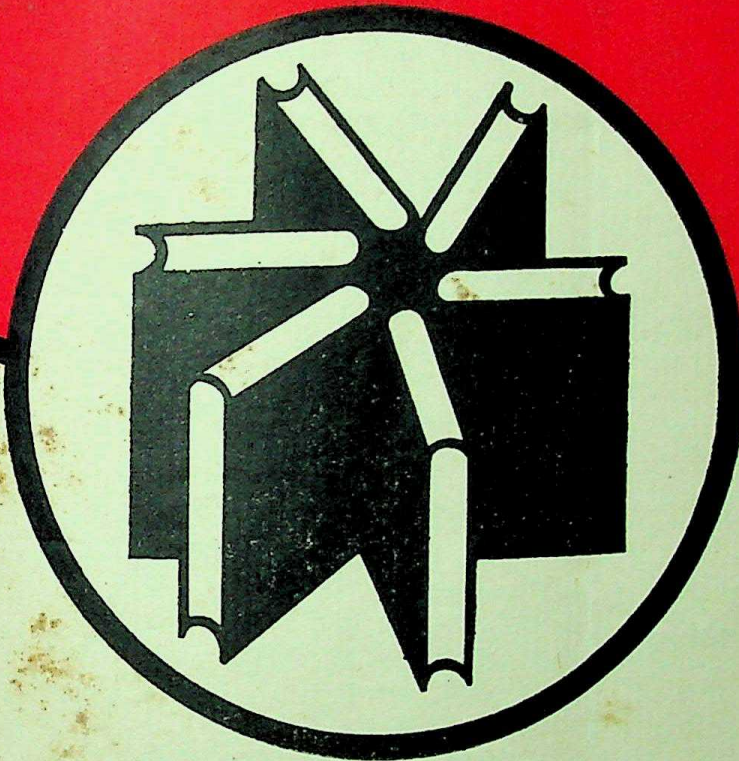
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# indian book chronicle

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A VIVEK TRUST FORTNIGHTLY

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Davendra Kaushik

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Dimension

Pran Chopra

Dieter Braun

The Indian Ocean: Region of  
Conflict or 'Zone of Peace'?

I. J. Bahadur Singh

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# Indian Book Chronicle

Vol. IX, No. 17, Sept. 1, 1984

## BOOKS REVIEWED

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## On the Indian Ocean

All the issues discussed in these two books have come alive in recent weeks, and as I read them not so long ago, they shed frightening light on the news then pouring in daily from the Persian Gulf. They helped one understand who will start the next world war and where and why. The books are that topical, and that important.

These issues include the militarisation of the Indian Ocean during the past decade and a half, particularly during the past half a decade; the designs and perfidy of those who are escalating this dangerous game; the way in which local disputes, movements and aspirations are being sucked into these designs; and how this process threatens the independence of all countries whose shores are washed by the Indian Ocean.

Along the way both books also discuss the pathetic fortunes of the non-aligned countries' move, in and outside the United Nations, to have the Indian Ocean declared and accepted as a Zone of Peace, free of nuclear weapons and rival bases of the super powers; the shadow cast upon the move by the events in and around Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf; and the inconsistencies, hesitations, and ambiguities in India's Indian Ocean policy first in the wake of the Sino-Indian war in 1962 and then as India saw herself reaching the status of a nuclear weapon country.

As I read the two books, and simultaneously saw American designs dropping their veil in the Persian Gulf, all these issues came into dramatic focus and the books read like two well informed daily commentaries. One also marvelled at the prescience of Sardar K.M. Pannikar that maverick intellectual and grand father of all of India's present day Indian Ocean scholars, who had predicted 40 years ago that "... The possibility has to be visualised of America entering the Indian Ocean as a major naval power" and that "a Russian entry" also had to be "kept in mind."

### FAR FROM ALIKE

The two books are about the same subject but are far from alike. Dieter Braun's is more like history, Devendra Kaushik's more like a powerful interpretative essay thereon. The former is rich in

**Davendra Kaushik, The Indian Ocean: A Strategic Dimension,** pp. 107, Vikas, 1983, Rs. 95.00.

**Dieter Braun, The Indian Ocean: Region of Conflict or 'Zone of Peace'?** pp. 228, Oxford University Press, 1983, Rs. 130.00.

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description, information, a scholar's account of the way things happened. The latter is a forceful ideological view of why they happened that way and what they might do to the peace of the world. One is a scholar's analysis of facts, the other a scathing analysis of motives by a sharp intellect.

Braun is not without his point of view. It is generally a western view, but more European than American (he works at a research institute near Munich, West Germany). Therefore he is rather more detached and able to see things, at least once in a while, through the eyes of the Indian Ocean sector of the Third World. Thus he is able to see very well, at various places between pages 146 and 171, Saudi Arabia's mental reservations about the closeness of its relations with USA as US mistakes and Soviet gains multiply in the Gulf area, or the anti-US sentiments in the island states of the western Indian Ocean.

Kaushik on the other hand, who is Associate Professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, is a passionate Third Worlder though uninhibited, almost polemical, in supporting the Soviet view. His passion sharpens his insights but also leads him astray at times. For example he picks up various unofficial comments in USA, the country with the most diverse unofficial commentators, and presents them as though they represented official policy. That they do no more than did either Pannikar or K.B. Vaidya in India, with whose exaggerated view of what India should be doing in the Indian Ocean Kaushik himself disagrees to some extent.

If Braun goes wrong on factual details at times, it is probably because as an European he is more distant from the scene and less involved in it than an American or Russian scholar would be or one from an Indian Ocean country. For example he says on page 77 that the "Soviet Union invoked the treaty (with Afghanistan) as grounds for invasion." Whether what the Soviet Union did was "invasion" or not is a matter of opinion and Braun is entitled to his. But the fact is that the treaty was invoked by Afghanistan. He also misperceives and overstates, on page 137, the adverse effect of the developments in and around Afghanistan upon the overall Indo-Soviet relations, which have never been closer despite some disagreements over the causes and cure of the Afghan crisis.

#### MINOR FLAWS

But these are minor flaws in two otherwise excellent books. Each author, by his respective quality, adds to the value of his book. For being more European than American, Braun is more persuasive about the western view. For being non-aligned on the side of the Soviet Union Kaushik is more convincing in his criticism of the shortcomings of the Indian policy the general direction of which he quite clearly approves of.

Being distant, Braun is able to give brief but very good overviews, as he gives of India's view of its own position in South Asia from page 130 on and of the facts of this position a few pages later;

or his account (p. 139) of the interaction between regional and extra-regional security and diplomatic factors in the Indian Ocean area; or of the differences between Indian Ocean countries themselves on the value and attainability of a zone of peace (p. 176 onwards); or of the Soviet skill in keeping much closer than USA to the Third World and non-aligned countries' position (pp. 184-85) without giving away prematurely any essential Soviet interest. This advantage of the author's distance and detachment culminates (pp. 198-99) in a very clear, and, in my view, quite accurate analysis of the probable lines on which the politics of the peace zone will evolve in the coming years and the East, the West and the Third World, will gain or lose.

#### INTENSE CONVICTION

But penetrating insights which Devendra Kaushik gives could not have come from a detached and distant observer. They are the product of intense conviction. Kaushik fully subscribes to the prophecy, which he quotes of the great Alfred Mahan, that the Indian Ocean is "the key to the seven seas. In the 21st century the destiny of the world will be decided on its waters." This is because to the great oil wealth and other major natural products of the littoral countries, such as rubber and tin, the discoveries made by the ocean sciences have added the immense wealth of the nodules on the seabed, and to the great importances of the Indian Ocean trade routes the military sciences have added the immense importance of the Arabian Sea for under-sea warfare, and in the process he



berates K. Subramaniam and IDSA, with nuclear submarines and missiles.

But Kaushik vehemently rejects the view that the growing and dangerous militarisation of the Indian Ocean is the result of "rivalry" between the two super powers. He traces most of it to the military ambitions of the United States alone, and does a good job of proving it by showing that the United States started to project its military power into the Indian Ocean so much earlier than the Soviet Union, and has carried it so much further, that it cannot say it is only reacting to a rival's challenge or is only keeping ahead in a race.

Nor has the American military build up anything to do with events in Afghanistan. It pre-dates them by far. It is a product of the same global aggrandisement by Pentagon and the same anti-Soviet fixation in Washington because of which American diplomacy killed at its birth the initiative by the non-aligned countries, which the Soviet Union is willing to support if USA does too, to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace. The United States opposed the non-aligned move almost ten years before the Afghan crisis, and its opposition was presaged in still earlier events such as American backing for the creation of the British Indian Ocean Territory in the mid-60s, which includes Diego Garcia, in complete violation of UN decisions on decolonisation.

#### DEFENSIVE RESPONSE

Kaushik is able to quote many US and UN experts as well the Stockholm institute, SIPRI, in

support of his view that the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean is purely a defensive response, and a very limited one at that, to aggressive American designs. On pages 38-39, 42-45, and 68-70, Kaushik gives a brief but succinct account of these designs, although his polemical language irritates at times, for example on pages 49-50.

But I read the two books not as a student of global military affairs, which I am not, but as a student first of Indian and then of South Asian security interests. For this reason I was particularly impressed by Kaushik's excellent account (pp 93-95) of Sri Lanka's initiative and leadership role in developing the concept of an Indian Ocean free of nuclear weapons and super power bases. But correspondingly I was sad to see the hesitations and contradictions in the Indian role. So long as these were caused only by the shock of the Chinese attack in 1962 and the dimming of Nehru's vision which was caused by it, one can more pity than criticise the Indian faltering. But when illusions of nuclear grandeur blind Indian policy makers to India's real security interests and leadership role, one cannot but be angry.

The concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace requires the acceptance of two basic obligations. Both have been prescribed directly in the zone of peace resolution adopted by the NAM summit at Lusaka in 1970, and indirectly again in the UN resolution of 1971 which recalls both from the Lusaka resolution. One is that the Indian Ocean be kept free of "great power rivalries and com-

petition as well as bases conceived in the context of such rivalries and competition." The other is that "the area should also be free of nuclear weapons."

Both resolutions impose both obligations equally upon the super powers and on the "littoral and hinterland" states of the Ocean. Both sides should keep "the area" free of bases, neither the super powers seeking them nor the Ocean states granting them; and both sides should keep it free of nuclear weapons, neither outsiders bringing them in nor the Ocean states acquiring them.

#### THE NUCLEAR OPTION

India has been an active supporter of both resolutions, but the debate has lately taken a curious turn within India. We remain loud in demanding that the super powers keep their bases and nuclear weapons out. In the context of the possibility of US bases in Pakistan we also remain loud in demanding that the Ocean states must not grant such bases. But voices are now heard in India, as Kaushik notes (p. 99) that the concept does not bar the Ocean states acquiring the Bomb. Sometimes pure academics say it and sometimes those recognised as sponsored kite fliers of the hawks in the government. In fact Kaushik himself indulges in a bit of sophistry on this point (p. 100).

In principle we have always opposed the "discrimination" that countries which have been piling up nuclear weapons themselves should require others to forsake this option. But we ac-



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cepted this as self-denial both in the NAM and UN debates. Why are we pedalling away from it now? Because we did not have the capability in 1970 and 1971 and acquired it at Pokhran in 1974?

I concede that consistency in diplomacy is less important than national defence. But I doubt we will buy more defence by backtracking on our own obligations as an Ocean state and emphasising only those of the big powers. We would only fuel still more suspicion among our neighbours that we want the big powers out only because we want to rule the roost ourselves. This is not the place to debate the point very much, so I will only state my firm conviction that whether or not India goes nuclear or catches up with China or fails to the security interests of the Ocean states, especially of the South Asian, and most especially of India, will be better served by relations of trust and cooperation between the South Asian coun-

tries, then they will be by any action by any South Asian country which aggravates the cleavages in South Asia and enables outsiders to exploit them as well as they have been exploited so far. This opportunity to weaken India by dividing it from its neighbours is not ordained for them; it can be ended if the right climate of trust is created within South Asia. It will not help us create if we are seen to be going back upon the obligations we accepted under the peace zone concept.

Let me end this (I am sorry) long review of these two stimulating books on a sour note. I think Vikas should hang its head in shame. Even for Vikas the proof reading of Kaushik's book is just shocking, and made more so by the contrast with the excellent production of Braun's by OUP.

*Pran Chopra, a well known journalist, is currently fellow of the Centre for Policy Research.*

## Politics in Biracial Societies

Raj K. Vasil

Politics in Biracial Societies

Vikas, 1984, Rs. 125.00.

Reviewed by I.J. Bahadur Singh

Violence and racial conflict are two ingredients of modern society which have reared their ugly head in many countries of the world both developed and developing, replacing conventional patterns of destabilisation such as urges for drastic revolutionary changes. However, this pheno-

menon is more pronounced in countries of the Third World where poverty and the resultant overall backgroundness have heightened communal sensitivities.

The book under review is a study of the political implications of racial conflict in the biracial

societies of Fiji, Guyana, Malaysia and Trinidad. It examines how and why racial conflict has become an essential element of the political scene and how it affects the functioning of the political processes.

### NO SHIFT

It brings to the forefront the interesting fact that although representative government, based on majority rule, was introduced in all these countries when independence was achieved, there has been no shift in the exercise of political power from one racial group to another. Nor, indeed has there been any genuine sharing of power amongst the various racial groups.

Political power has remained in the hands of the group most favoured during the period of foreign rule by the colonial masters. This has happened because the group alone was the indigenous group and therefore the rightful "Owner" of the country or because being urban-based it was the more westernised and christianised of the immigrant group. It has taken advantage of the opportunities for western education provided by the Christian missionaries, and at times by the colonial rulers themselves.

In Fiji and Malaysia the indigenous Fijians and Malays have maintained their political foothold and, there seems no inclination on their part to relinquish political power or to share it on an equal basis with the Fiji Indians or with the non-Malays in Malaya. Similarly, in Guyana and Trinidad the negro population



show no inclination to allow the Indians to capture political power or to acquire a reasonable share of it through the ballot box. The ruling leadership in both these countries seems to be fairly well entrenched, and have become past masters in the art of maintaining a government or group in power by the processes of political and constitutional manipulation.

#### MULTIRACIAL SOCIETIES

The author mentions that the chief reason for selecting these four countries for the purposes of comparative analysis is that they are essentially of the group called racial society—an important sub-group of those designated as plural or multiracial societies. The significant point is that they all consist of two racial groups each accounting for at least around 40 per cent of the total population of the country.

It may be worth while giving the breakdown of the racial composition of these countries:-

(i) Fiji	
Indians	50.1 per cent
Fijians	41.7 per cent
Europeans and part-	
Europeans	4.7 per cent
Chinese	1.0 per cent
Other Pacific Islanders	2.4 per cent

(ii) GUYANA	
Indians	50.4 per cent
Negroes (including of mixed race)	42.5 per cent
Portuguese and other	

Europeans	1.8 per cent
Chinese	0.6 per cent
Amerindians	4.4 per cent

#### (iii) MALAYSIA

Malays (including those of Indonesian or Aboriginal ethnic origin) and other indigenous peoples	53.0 per cent
Chinese	35.5 per cent

Indians	10.6 per cent
Others	0.8 per cent

#### (iv) TRINIDAD

Negroes	42.83 per cent
Indians	40.11 per cent
Mixed race	14.17 per cent
Whites	1.22 per cent
Chinese	0.86 per cent
Syrians/Lebanese	0.11 per cent
Others	0.70 per cent

The author has divided the countries dealt with into two groups. One is Fiji and Malaysia where the confrontation is between the indigenous racial groups and the immigrants. The second group is Guyana and Trinidad where both contending groups are immigrants. In the first category, the determining factor in their relationship between the two main groups is the fact that one is indigenous to the country and the other consists of immigrants and their dependents.

In Fiji, the Fijians are firmly committed to the view that as the only sons of the soil, the country belongs to them, and that the immigrant Indian community can live and earn a livelihood only under conditions

determined, in the final analysis, by the Fijians themselves. The same view is held by the indigenous Malays in Malaysia.

In the second group, the Blacks assert a special claim over the country as their "Hereditary Right". They maintain they were the first immigrants and that as slaves they went 'through hell' and therefore contributed most to the two countries. This, they believe, entitles them to a special place and to special privileges in the countries. This special status or entitlement claimed by the indigenous peoples in Fiji and Malaysia and by the Blacks in Guyana and Trinidad is quite unacceptable to the other constituents of the biracial societies. The latter are numerous enough to refuse to accept a subordinate role. Further, they believe that they have made valuable contributions to the economic development and prosperity of the respective countries; therefore, are entitled to at least equal political status and rights.

#### LIMITED ECONOMIC POWER

It is significant that in all the four countries because of the special characteristics of colonial rule, and, the socio-cultural pattern of these societies, the groups that have assumed a preeminent political role since independence enjoy only a limited share of economic power. A significant part of the commercial and business life of the countries is controlled by the racial groups which enjoy only a limited share of political power. As a result, the groups enjoying a paramount po-



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sition in the spheres of government and politics attempt to perpetuate this by all possible means. Often, they are forced to use their political power to secure an increasing share of economic power. This sometimes leads to confrontation and conflict. The author examines in some detail the colonial legacy in all the four countries as well as the constitutional framework, and racial attitudes and relationships, and the state of the political parties.

The manipulations of the political parties and the rigging of elections have been some of the new instruments by which the present governments have been able to hang on to power. The author is dead right in pointing out that the experience of the colonial rule has predisposed people to attach primacy to political power. He reminds us of what Kwame Nkrumah said "Seek Ye first the political kingdom and all things shall be added to you."

Power is viewed in all the countries in racial terms. For example, in Malaysia, the Malays express their fears in terms of Chinese economic power and non-Malays would like to have a share in the political power of the Malays. In Fiji, the talk is in terms of Fijian political power and Indian economic power. In Guyana it can be said that the Indians feel totally helpless in the face of African political power. The position can be said to be more or less the same in Trinidad.

#### LIGITIMISATION

All the four countries are constitutional democracies where the acquisition of political power is

legitimised through periodical elections. Apart from Fiji where it is suggested that the elections have been free and fair, the author describes the various unfair methods adopted, particularly in Guyana and Trinidad to consolidate power; and, in some cases, e.g. in Guyana even to ensure a 2/3rd majority so that constitutional changes favouring the ruling power can be made. In each of these two countries the purpose of retaining political powers is to ensure that it will remain in the hands of the Africans and that the key instrument of power i.e. the Civil Services, the Poli-

ce and the Armed services can continue to retain their large African majority.

Finally, the author attempts to examine how the imbalance in these societies can be set right. Certain minimum conditions have to be established. First of all, it is necessary to ensure a reasonable working of majority rule and the right kind of political environment in which the minority enjoys its rights. Secondly, the rules of the democratic game must be observed and the elections must be free and fair. Thirdly, it is necessary that all groups are assured of political repre-

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sensation. He favours the introduction of a system like proportional representation "that does away with the very need to delimit electoral constituencies thereby eliminating all likelihood of ger-

rymandering".

*I.J. Bahadur Singh an ex-diplomat is currently handling the Other India Project on behalf of the India International Centre.*

## On Sikh Politics

**Sikh Politics (1920-40)**

pp. 254, *Vihal Publications*, Kurukshetra, 1984, Rs. 80.00.

Reviewed by Amrik Singh

It is somewhat difficult to review this book. By itself it is a fairly good book. The analysis is incisive and the writing is good. The manner in which the argument has been built up also shows an analytical mind at work. In short, there is hardly anything much that can be said in criticism of the book.

But having said this, one has to pick an argument with the way the author has defined his subject. The exact title of the book is *Sikh Politics: 1920-40*. As a starting point 1920 was the right year to adopt. World War I had just ended and the Punjab was aflame. Jallianwala Bagh massacre had taken place only a year earlier and that had created a stir throughout the country. From being only one of the several provinces where the national movement was strong, at one stroke Punjab moved into the centre of the arena. The decade beginning with the 1920s was therefore a decade full of perils and possibilities as they say.

The Sikh community too was on the threshold of a turning point in its development. Almost one-third of the Indian Army which had taken part in World

War I consisted of the Sikhs. In terms of loyalty to the Crown therefore there was little more than they could have done. The Morley-Minto Scheme of 1919 however did not show any special consideration to the Sikhs, and they felt greatly disappointed. More or less parallel to it was the situation developing around the attempt of the Sikhs to take over the control of their historic gurdwaras and the reluctance of the British Government to facilitate such a transfer of power. This led to bitter confrontation between the British Government and the Akalis for almost half a decade. From this point of view therefore, to begin with 1920 was a right decision to take.

### WHY AT 1940?

But why end at 1940? That is a question to which it is difficult to find an answer. 1940 neither marked the beginning nor the end of any important political development. The War had started in 1939. The Quit India Movement took place in 1942. The Cripps Mission to India had come out shortly before that. Attempts to work out a solution to the

problem were initiated at first by the Cabinet Mission in 1946 and then by Wavell & subsequently by Mountbatten. In 1947 came the Partition of the country. Amongst other things, it meant the uprooting of more than a couple of million Sikhs from West Punjab and the wholesale migration to East Punjab and the rest of India. All these were crucial not only in respect of what happened to the country as a whole but also in respect of what happened to the Sikhs.

Would it not have been much better therefore if, instead of stopping at 1940, the author had come upto 1947 or perhaps 1950? This would have enabled the author to cover a decade of turbulence and eventful happenings. What happened to the Sikhs in the decade of 1940-50 in much more meaningful than in the decade of 1930-40 or the decade of 1950-60. In other words, by extending the scope of his study from 1940 to 1950 the author would have at one stroke encompassed the first phase of real significance in Sikh politics. The second phase can be said to have started with the census of 1950. One cannot say that one has come to the end of that phase yet. By omitting to extend the chronology of his work, the author in my opinion, has done some kind of injustice to himself.

The reason as far as I can judge from a reading of the book is that the book was first started as a Ph.D thesis. While undertaking a study of that kind it is customary to limit one's area of work. In terms of that consideration, dealing with the period 1920 to 1940 seems to have been the right decision to take. But to have merely revised end updated



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the thesis and prepared it for publication in the form of a book, as the author has done, did not fully take into account the kind of requirement that a scholarly book demands.

It should not have been necessary to dwell at so much length on this aspect of the problem except that it incidentally illustrates one of the weaknesses in publishing today. More than anything else, what our publishing houses fail to supply is what is called the editorial input. It is the editor's job to interact with the author and point out to him what is the kind of thing that the world of scholarship demands and how best the demand can be met. It is all the more necessary to say this because the book is brought out by Vishal Publications which is a Kurukshetra-based publishing house. My advice to this publishing house would be: kindly obtain the best possible editorial help so that the standard of scholarship goes on improving.

The blurb also states that the author is working on another book entitled *The Communal Politics in Punjab, 1920-47*. In a sense this confirms the point which I am trying to make that 1940 was an unnatural dividing point particularly in respect of Sikh politics. It is now for the author to decide how he is going to re-cast his material. The basic point which I wish to make is that what makes for a good thesis does not also make for a good book.

#### MERITS

Having said all this however, I must go on to point out the merits of the study. The first 296

chapter is devoted to what he described as the "politics of Loyalty and Dissent" and this leads on to the next chapter "Confrontation with Government". This is an accurate description of the situation as it obtained in 1920 and by using these two phrases the author has put his finger on the right spot. The next two chapters dealing with the "Struggle for Gurdwara Reforms" are good but not all that original. Mohinder Singh in his book *The Akali Movement* made use of untapped material in a substantial way. What Tuteja has done is by and large to adhere to the account given in that book through in a few matters he has shifted the emphasis somewhat and to good advantage.

His next chapter "Struggle for Representation" once again puts his finger on the right spot. After the Akali agitation was over the main issue on the agenda was how to win better representation

for the Sikh community. His discussion of the Nehru Report, the role of Mangal Singh, Sardul Singh, Caveeshar, Baba Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh and various other is well informed and balanced.

All this is good and gratifying. Only when he comes to the last chapter entitled "Conclusion" things begin to falter for the reason already referred to. 1940 does not by any means suggest the terminal stage of any of the political processes which were at work. These processes culminated in 1947 and it would have added much more weight and authority to this analysis had a different terminal date been chosen.

On the whole it is a fairly good book and is recommended to all those who wish to understand the earlier phase of Sikh politics.

Amrik Singh

## A Mine of Information

Hannan Ezekial, Editor

Corporate Sector in India

pp. 174, Vikas, 1984, Rs. 125.00.

Reviewed by S. Y. Govindarajan

This book is the result of studies undertaken by The Economic Times Research Bureau and has been edited by the editor of *The Economic Times*. As stated in the preface, *The Economic Times* has been preparing for many years financial studies of the largest companies in the private sector ranked by size. The first 101 largest companies are called corporate giants and the next 150 are listed as mini-giants.

The public sector companies covered are those which are included by the Bureau of Public Enterprises in its survey.

In view of the great deal of attention those studies attracted and the demand for them in a more permanent form this volume is published. It relates to the year 1981-82 and presents a detailed analysis of the performance and financial results of the giant and mini-giant companies.



in the private and public sectors.

### A GOOD YEAR

1981-82 was a good year for the giant private sector companies. They recorded an impressive growth in assets, net sales and gross profits. 40% of the top private giants held 64% of the total assets and 46% of the private giants accounted for 73% of the aggregate net sales during 1981-82.

Tata Iron and Steel continued to be the largest private giant in the private sector in terms of assets. It was first in 1980-81 and second in 1979-80.

Among the top five corporate giant companies by assets, viz. TISCO, TELCO, Calcutta Electric, Reliance Textile and Associated Cement, only the first two had the unique position of occupying a place among the top five even by the criteria of net worth net sales and gross profits.

The growth in profits was utilised to increase internal resources through higher retention.

These and other conclusions are drawn from the study of financial information gathered by the research bureau. The inferences are drawn in a systematic manner and the limitations in the data presented are also spelt out. The rankings of various giant companies under different criteria viz. assets, net worth, net sales and gross profits is given. An alphabetical list of the giant companies (indicating their assets rank in 1981-82) is also given. Analysis of the rate of increase in sales, assets, net worth and gross profits (of the

first ten highest increases) is given. Similarly those which have had fall in these (leading the fall) are also mentioned indicating the rate of fall.

This much is enough to indicate the useful analyses done by the researchers in respect of the giant private companies.

### MINI GIANTS

The mini-giants is the next 150 companies that rank below the 10 giants considered earlier have not done so well as the giants in 1981-82. In fact, they have not done even as well as they themselves did in 1980-81. The growth rates in net worth and gross profits of mini giant companies showed steeper declines in 1981-82 than in the rates growth in total assets and net sales. Some of the giant companies of last year moved down to become mini-giants and some minis moved upto become giants. Two of them which become giants this year (1981-82) were not even in the list of mini-giants in the previous year (page 5).

The analysis and presentation of the data and statistical information relating to the mini-giants are on the same lines as in the case of the giants.

The third chapter gives an analysis of the profitability ratios of giant and mini-giant companies taken together (220 companies in all). For inter firm comparisons the three profitability ratios are used. The analysis reveals some interesting points and observations. The capital formation and tax rates, diversification of giant companies and value added in the case of giants and mini-giants are discussed in the

subsequent three chapters.

### PUBLIC SECTOR

The last two chapters deal with public sector enterprises (in Central Sector only)—their performance and value added relating to them. 1981-82 was a good year for the Central public sector undertakings. They showed an impressive performance in their operating results. The analysis of the various data is on the name lines as of the private sector companies.

157 Central Government companies were taken for study. This list was prepared for ranking and analysis after excluding financial companies and companies in government which have no direct responsibility for management. The list also excludes companies under construction and those which went into production in 1981-82.

SAIL (Steel Authority of India) is the largest unit (capital employed Rs. 5127 crores). Its net worth is also the highest (Rs. 3352 crores) 10c's sales were the highest (Rs. 7944 crores). ONGC earned the highest gross profit (Rs. 661 crores).

This book is a welcome addition to those on the corporate sector. One hopes that a similar volume will be brought out every year.

Many persons including financial analysts, students, writers and prospective investors will find this book quite helpful. Though not particularly analytical, it is a mine of information.

*S. Y. Govindarajan, a member of the I.A.A.S. is currently posted at Hyderabad.*



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## Constitutionalism in a Changing Society

O. P. Gauba

Constitutionalism in a Changing Society

pp. 94, Gitanjali Publishing House, 1983, Rs. 75.00.

Reviewed by H. Ashirvad

The publication of this book by O. P. Gauba is timely. In the context of the political system of the countries of the Third World, constitutionalism is a major casualty due to several factors. As the title of the book suggests, it examines the relevance of constitutionalism in the present day world. There may be scores of books on each individual constitution but the field of the theories of constitutionalisms still remains uncultivated. This book is a move in that direction.

### COMPARATIVE STUDY

In this handy small volume the author has posed basic questions relating to modern constitutions such as what is meant by the term constitution, history of constitutionalism, important views on constitutionalism, constitutionalism in the developing societies in general and the Indian constitution in particular. He has also indicated and discussed at length the forces that operate against constitutional government. This has made the book a useful addition to the literature on comparative study of constitutionalism.

The author has naturally started with the enquiry about what is meant by the term 'Constitution'. It is a system or body of fundamental principles according to which a nation, state, or body politics is 'constituted' and governed. Thus constitutionalism in

a formal sense, denotes the principles and practices under which a community is governed by a constitution. Constitutionalism advocates effective checks on the absolute powers of government so that the liberties of the citizens are not curtailed without adequate reason. Thus it is a political system that stands for both progress and order as it is not only a machinery to regulate the governance of the country but also an effective device to bring social change with an aim to realise social justice.

The author explains that constitutional government means limited government which has to act as an instrument for fulfilling the needs and aspirations of the people. The constitutionalists are of the view that protecting rights and freedoms of the individual, imposing restraints on the arbitrary power, and making government an instrument of fulfilling the needs and aspiration of the people is possible. They refuse to recognize alternative forms of structures and processes as possible ways of constitutionalism. But the politics of constitutionalism has to be understood in the totality of a country's socio-economic situation and only then we can discern the value of this important political concept of constitutionalism. While discussing the history of constitutionalism, the author traces its origin and evaluation from ancient Greece and Rome and

later medieval periods. When and when any substance curbs the power of rulers that signifies constitutionalism. Yet the latter in the proper sense of the term is essentially a modern concept and still in the process of evolution.

Then the author discusses the important views on constitutionalism. The liberal view of constitutionalism treats the liberties of the citizens as a matter of continuous adjustment of the different interests, and this adjustment takes place through the exercise of pressure by different groups of society on the political process. Liberal constitutions prevailing in the Western World have of course allowed for extensive regulation of men's activities for the social interest and also for the welfare of the vulnerable sections of society but all these measures have served as supporters to the capitalist system, without accomplishing radical change of society in the interests of the common people.

### MARXIST VIEW

The Marxist view is that the liberal view is a device for legitimization of an exploitative capitalist system. Therefore, the Marxist view attempts to evolve an alternative model of constitutional system. In Marxist terminology, the economic mode of production constitutes the base sub-structure of society, while the state only represents a super-structure; and constitutionalism is the class character of the state. The state is primarily an instrument of the dominant class. As long as power is held by the bourgeoisie, the proletariat cannot have rights in the real sense. In order to secure the real rights



of the people the proletariat must capture state power because they alone represent the people. With this capture of power the old state machine must be replaced by a new one.

The socialist concept of constitutionalism is a message of true freedom for the exploited classes in the modern age. The Soviet system and other similar systems were criticised on two counts: (a) Elections under these systems are ineffective due to the monopoly of the communist party and (b) civil liberties are confined only to the pages of constitutions thus remaining only at the theoretical level because of the monopoly of the communist ideology and goals. There is no encouragement to the freedom of expression in the liberal sense of the term.

Gauba has very preceptively analysed constitutionalism in the developing societies and their drafting their own constitutions against socio-cultural and historical background. He rightly quotes the opinion of Macpherson who says that the developing societies are interested only in national development while securing freedom from starvation, ignorance, disease and early death. The absence of legal tradition and political dominance of tribe and family in these societies precludes a healthy development of constitutionalism. There is rise of groups, middle classes and labour unions for instance, but to what extent do they check the arbitrary powers of state is a matter of doubt.

#### INDIAN EXPERIENCE

The chapter on the Indian constitutional experience has been

quite comprehensively dealt with. The author is of the opinion that Indian constitution is a liberal constitution and the existence of the right of property as one of the fundamental rights does not make the constitution move in the direction of a socialist goal. It is also coming in the way of its growth. Hence the Congress Government in 1976 enacted the 42nd Amendment to the constitution to remove this obstacle. It has brought out several changes. As a result one notices that India is now a sovereign socialist secular democratic Republic. Directive principles are more comprehensive; the latter have precedence over the fundamental rights, putting the amending power of parliament beyond the reach of judiciary scrutiny, so that "the will of the people should prevail" and making explicitly the President of India act (in all matters) on the aid and advice of his council of Ministers. In 1977 when Janata party came to power at the centre and in a large number of states the 44th Amendment Act was brought forth. As a result, the right to property (i.e. "the right to acquire, hold and dispose of property" included in the "Right to Freedom"—Article 19 (F) and the provision that "No person shall be deprived of his property save authority of Law"—Article 31) was repealed as a fundamental right but retained only as a legal right. Surprisingly this act of parliament has not led to any constitutional controversy nor has it provoked resistance from the intelligentsia. The author expresses his doubt that against this background (i.e. constitutional remedies for the protection of the citizen's genuine property)

the executive may suspend, impose restriction on personal freedom. It is not a sound constitutional measure. In the absence of a vigilant public opinion there is a need of "checks and balances" between the political organs (legislature and executive) and the judiciary and this is precisely the real problem of constitutionalism.

#### HOSTILE FORCES

In "Sources of strain in the modern constitutional practices" the author tries to pinpoint the difficulties that are involved in effecting this concept. It is in this context that the author highlights the forces that operate against constitutional government in the present day world either to weaken or even destroy it. There are, broadly speaking, two types of strains: (a) apparent and latent. Rise of Fascism represents the most striking from of apparent strains and forces of neocolonialism are very strong through latent strain on constitutionalism. In addition to these forces like war, economic crisis, famine or pestilence, and absolutism in any form are operating against constitutional government. The author opines that the most difficult problem confronting the constitutional government is how to defend itself successfully against the enemies. Because it often involves the use of methods, such as suppression of liberties of such enemies who might otherwise utilise the liberties to overthrow the constitutional government or suspension of safeguards of a fair trial etc; which are opposed to the basic principle of constitutional gov-



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ernment itself. These may be justified only for the preservation of the higher values which constitutional government symbolises, provided ample precaution is taken against the misuse or excessive use of the powers taken by the government for the purpose.

Despite the stresses and strains on constitutionalism cited above the author rightly concludes that "constitutionalism represents a value which stipulates a mechanism for orderly change in society".

On the whole the publication is an up-to-date and concise account of the relevance of constitutionalism in the changing society. This book has been written primarily for the students of Indian Universities whose knowledge of the subject is limited. O.P. Gauba has succeeded in presenting a good book on this subject which will stimulate further interest of the students.

*N. Ashirvad teaches Political Science at Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh.*

## What Ails Indian Agriculture?

G. N. Seetharaman

**Strategy and Tactics of India's Agricultural Development: The Role of the State**

pp. 154, Ajanta Publications, 1984, Rs. 60.00.

Reviewed by B. Hooja

As far as its study and analysis go, Indian agriculture is like the proverbial elephant being touched and probed by half a dozen blind men, each coming out with his own perception. Over the last couple of decades, much has been written and many verdicts given on the agricultural or the rural scene. Quite a few remedies have been suggested to ensure its recovery and health from whatever has been ailing it. Among others, social scientists of all hues and colours have also begun to write about this pet theme, which no doubt is a welcome sign. Seetharaman of the Institute of public Enterprises, Hyderabad, has now joined this select group. In the bargain, he has applied a Marxist approach and has also drawn from many unpublished Soviet

sources and scholars. As if that was not enough, he has added an annexure of his Critique of Dandekar's Romance with Marx (which is a reprint of an article in the "Mainstream" of February 11 and 18, 1978) to refute Dandekar's main charge that the Marxian social sciences have got into a stage of stagnation or that sort of approach does not apply to the changing and complex modern society. His bonafides apart, we need not go into those polemics. We take up Seetharaman's analysis for whatever it is worth.

One word, however. Most social scientists in India who write and theorise or pontificate about rural India do not appear to know their *real* India in its lakhs of huts and hamlets. Nor do they know much about the varied ac-

tivities or group of operations called agriculture and much less do they know about the specific improvements which science and technology have brought about and the manner in which or extent to which the cultivators have responded to these challenges. Their pool of knowledge is a pot-pourri of second hand information culled from official and other reports or newspaper reviews mixed with some important or adopted theories and observations which may have gained currency outside or in some "mecca" of learning to which they have an easy access. Perhaps that is why much of what they write appears to be opinionated and partisan, even when they try to be academic and analytical.

To some extent, the book under review also suffers from this flaw. It seems that a pundit not a krishi pundit by any means, has gone through the exercise of observing and analysing the main trends or features of what has been happening on the agricultural front. Perhaps with a little more close and personal knowledge, if not the experience of the down-to-earth "the dirty hands" business of agriculture, he would have given a different perspective and a somewhat modified approach. As it is he has not cared to (and cannot) proceed beyond an "overview" of a vast and varied but changing scene. Naturally, he has picked up one or two main features and stressed their relevance or meaning again and again.

EARLY PHASE

"The role of the state" is the sub-title of the book. But he



not paused to explain as to why and how "the state" in India has come to play a role, or for that matter, why should the state have a role of direct intervention in a sphere of economic activity which has largely remained outside the state domain in most countries, at least until recently?

The query becomes all the more relevant in the light of the cryptic observation by the author that "the state in India representing the exploiting classes" has been a major participant in the process of developing "capitalist relations". As he puts it, there has been no "natural" evolution of capitalism in India and no class interaction as a result of which a corresponding capitalist structure should have emerged in the villages in the past. Such a nexus is now being sought to be built up in the post-independence period, and the state has contributed to the formation or development of "an integrated national economic plan" and in the process "overcoming the dependence on developed capitalist states", though its theories (?) of community development or technological determinism have shown a definite bias towards a capitalist model of development.

The strategies and tactics of rural agricultural development in India have, in fact, flown from the so-called "Nehru-Mahalanobis model" which had some similarities with the "Feldman model" tried out earlier in the Soviet Union, and which had some positive characteristics, so that until the seventies, it could give fairly satisfying results. At least its validity was not questioned much, until then. Thus there was an increasing stress on industrialisation and on adoption

of modern technology to transform the stagnant agrarian economy of the colonial era (seriously disturbed and dislocated due to the pressure of world war II and the partition of the sub-continent) and to overcome the challenges of widespread poverty and unemployment. But, in India, this has been basically a process of building up capitalist relations of production, to which the state was a party. Such is the essence of Seetharaman's reading of the early scene.

However, among the notable and more noticeable achievements on the rural or agricultural front we can count the strategies of land reforms (in spite of their faulty implementation and the limitations in respect of ceilings) or of the process of democratising the rural set-up (through the country-wide programme of community development and national extension system and the contribution to the state to build up and strengthen the infrastructure of irrigation and power projects, and subsequently the introduction of the "green revolution" based on new and modern technology adapted to Indian conditions and based on research as well improved inputs the "wonder seeds" and fertilizers.

It has not been a bad performance, as the author concedes, with an average compound rate of growth of about 3.5 per cent in the gross national product (GNP) and an increase in per capita incomes of between 1 and 1.5 per cent per year. In agricultural production, a measure of "self-reliance" has been achieved. What is more, all these achievements have been brought about under a democratic system

of the Westminster model with a fair measure of political stability.

#### CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT

But, and this seems to be a big "but", because the author has reverted to it again and again, in this process of "capitalist" development, a majority of the people has not been able to benefit from the fruits of growth. There has been a concentration of incomes and wealth in the hands of the urban and rural elites or the dominant and exploiting capitalist classes. Poverty in India is not "a negation of development", but "an expression of capitalist development", as the author has put it. He has reviewed the process in its three broad phases: viz: (1) the *fifties* with emphasis on reforms in the agrarian structure and industrial growth on western style, (ii) the *sixties* with measures to boost up agricultural and industrial production through the application of modern technology in areas of potential for development, of which process, the green revolution through high-yielding and hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides and supported by more facilities for irrigation and credit became the main vehicle of change in the agricultural sphere, and (iii) and the third phase in which the momentum of earlier growth seemed to have been lost and there were visible but disquieting signs of lower levels of production though the scenario improved somewhat towards the turn of the decade. In this phase "basic needs" strategy has also come to the fore.

Perhaps there can be no dispute or difference of opinion



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about the division of the post-independence era into such phases, though some aspects, might not have been as clear or distinctly defined. These phases, however, point out the main thrust of the changing strategy in the rural sector of the economy and its main achievements. There is no doubt that a stage had been reached recently when agricultural production appeared to have come to a stage of stagnation, though since then there have been new peaks of production, thanks to the unusually favourable weather conditions and the better or more timely and efficient management of inputs.

Yet, there is no denying the fact that there exist some fundamental and inherent weaknesses in the system. According to Seetharaman, these are structural weaknesses inasmuch as the land reforms, particularly the imposition and implementation of the ceilings laws, have not been carried forward to their logical end. Secondly, as the author has argued in the chapter on "Technological Determinism", recourse to technology has become an alternative to or an escape route or bypass of the need for structural reforms. The approach of the strategy of modernisation seems to suggest a deterministic faith in the "magic" of new technology, as if it would overcome all problems or challenges in the rural sector. The overall result of these strategies has been self-sufficiency in foodgrains largely through the initiative and enterprise of a small coterie of dynamic and affluent class of cultivators, which has adopted and naturally benefitted from the new semi-modern technology and

the new systems of inputs management. Increased incomes have also been stimulated, more so in the irrigated areas and among large-owners. But at the same time, economic disparities in the rural areas and between different regions have also been magnified, and the contrasts between the rich and the poor become more sharp.

#### STRUCTURAL REFORMS

Out of such contradictions and the accompanying crisis has emerged the new fangled strategy of "basic needs", of toning up "the quality of life", the concept of "(beneficiaries) participation", the emphasis on "grass-root growth" or other employment oriented activities or even the Janata Government's attempt to shift attention from industrial growth towards more investments in agriculture or in the beneficiary target group programmes. Once again, in judging such alternate strategies, which have also been advocated in many other third world countries, and in commenting on the views of many "bourgeois" economists, the author has urged and prescribed the primacy of basic structural or institutional reforms. His argument seems to be that the social consequences of the green revolution such as economic disparities and the growing polarising between the rich and the poor cannot be controlled or managed within the profit motivated capitalist mode of production despite all the stress on innovation in technology, investment or management.

As against the generally accepted and broadly advocated view

of many technocrats, economists and social scientists about the role of technical changes independent of the social or institutional changes, he has argued that "institutional changes prepare the soil for technical transformation. His plea is for a healthy agrarian structure based on radical reforms." Though he has not defined or clarified "radical" reforms or a "healthy" agrarian structure, he has counterposed this concept against some of the basic characteristics of "capitalist" agriculture such as owner based cultivation on farms of optimal size, profit motivated and markets oriented production, use of modern means and techniques of production and engagement of wage labour etc.

Even in his concluding chapter in which he has outlined his Priorities for Development and placed agrarian reforms quite at the top, he has not given a clear picture of an "alternative" or a "non-capitalist" agrarian structure. He has pleaded, among other things, for strict implementation of ceilings laws through the association of popular committees, protection of the interests of tenants and share-croppers, distribution of state lands among poor peasants and agricultural workers etc., which is not saying anything new or different from what has been the on-going measure of approach, except perhaps the manner or effectiveness of implementation. The same goes for his other suggestions about better "state" credit for the peasants and the ending of debt payments to money-lenders or toning up of co-operatives through their "democratisation" (?) whatever that be.



## CONCRETE STRATEGY

Apart from such recommendations and a somewhat academic summing up of his critique (or analysis) of the strategies adopted by the state in India, he has not been able to come out with any other concrete and long range new strategy of social, economic or technological changes for sustained growth with social justice. He seems to have developed a "deterministic" faith in the "panacea" of radical land reforms of a structural character in agriculture which, according to him, "would lead to a bettering of the social atmosphere in the villages as also increase production, productivity and employment." In the absence of such changes, the economic growth will become slow and questions of structural character will sharpen in the near future. The warnings are fair enough, but the remedial measures may be no better than palliatives. It is their vagueness which makes their effectiveness doubtful or partial.

Going by his main thesis, the question or the challenge is how

to convert the present-day capitalist model of development or mode of production (and distribution) into a "co-operative" or a "socialist" model within the existing democratic frame-work of the state and society in India? In this wider context, all he has to suggest is the "need of some modification in the field of choice of techniques, location of productive force etc., along with a greater emphasis on specific problems of small and cottage industries" plus agrarian reforms.

However, the limitations of his prescription need not make his diagnosis of the situation faulty or invalid. It is an interpretation of the Indian model of development and an explanation why this has not led to the miracle of equal prosperity for all. In any case, it may be taken as an invitation to further and more detailed work along these lines so as to find out and define a really workable and effective alternative strategy of development.

*B. Hooja retired from the IAS some years ago & lives in retirement at Jaipur.*

more involved with his material pursuits. The lack of coordination among the Indian poets has worsened the situation and widened the gap between good poetry and poetry lovers.

This problem is being faced in many parts of the world as the industrialization of the nations is taking new directions. Man is being lured to new and newer comforts and poetry which is nearer the soul than the body is receiving a setback. As one cannot see an end to this rat race man is involved with, poets and poetry lovers need to coordinate their efforts for promoting the cause of poetry.

In India poverty-readers are further divided due to different linguistic and regional divisions. Also, the distribution networks that enable books and journals to reach the readers living in different parts of the country have not grown fully and thus do not let books reach a wider audience. As poetry collections and journals are priced low, the distributors do not find the distributing of this material highly profitable. Thus only a very very small number of poetry-readers are able to get the required books and journals. Others who are unable to get the required materials, gradually lose interest in poetry and devote their time to their professional commitments or get interested in reading prose.

This whole situation has been disturbing a group of poets in Delhi namely Keshav Malik, J. P. Das, H. K. Kaul, Man Mohan Singh, Lakshmi Kannan, Priya Devi, Sunita Jain, and Balu Rao who have just recently launched a Poetry Society. The Poetry Society which has been registered with the Re-

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## Letters

## A Minority Cause

I

Sir:

I have read with great interest your editorial entitled 'A Minority Cause' published in *Indian Book Chronicle* 9(16), August 16, 1984. The Indian poets writing in English are in fact a small minority and the readers who read their poems also constitute a minority.

The number of readers who appreciate poetry and read it regularly has been declining. The main reason for the declining number in poetry-readers in proportion to the growth in population may be attributed to the decline in our aesthetic and artistic values. Man today is much



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gistrar of Societies plans to promote Indian poetry and look after the interest of poets in India. The society plans to undertake collection, interpretation, translation, publication and propagation of Indian poetry in India and other countries. As there is a great need for Indian poets to cooperate with each other and improve their status as a minority the establishment of the Society was long overdue. The Society has an uphill task to undertake. It would be able to do much useful work if Indian poets would unite together and join the Society. Further details may be obtained from the Secretary-General, The Poetry Society, L-67A, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017.

Dt: 1.9.84

Yours faithfully,  
H. K. Kaul  
Secretary-General  
The Poetry Society

Well, of course, it is a commentary on the intense politicisation of the reading public. Turncoats make far more exciting news than what you or I, or any of your distinguished reviewers, have to say about books our shallow intellectual community will pretend to have read in any case. It is equally a commentary on them, the intellectuals. Apart from rare exceptions, few of them have anything worthwhile to say on matters which they make a pretence of being concerned about. They are quite content to receive the ego strokes of their mutual admiration society, and to give them in return. But I mustn't ride away on a pet hobby horse. Let us forget them for a while and turn to friends of the Chronicle. There must be many. Let them at least come forward.

The Chronicle must continue.  
The world of books in India

would be the poorer without. If the publication of this letter will induce even one reader to prove that he is a friend of the journal it will have been worth it. My own cheque is enclosed. This is not to suggest that you should count me as a regular reviewer. As you know my tastes are highly idiosyncratic. But you always have an excitingly varied bag. I have been talking of the Chronicle but that is because I have not yet had the good fortune to know Chandarbhaga. I agree with your general position however that those of us who claim to be intellectuals must support minority causes. Without that, these causes would fail to prosper.

Good luck to the Chronicle  
to Chandarbhaga.

Yours sincerely  
John Lal

## II

30 August, 1984.

Sir,

I have just read your introductory article A MINORITY CAUSE in the Indian Book Chronicle of the 16th of August. I want to know whether it is really true that the Chronicle is in danger of fading out for lack of support. It is difficult to see how a journal I have always relied on for sound reviews of significant current publications could just disappear, and all because all of us who have benefited from it have not been honest enough to acknowledge our debt by sending in subscriptions. I include myself.

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## Books Received

(A brief notice here does not preclude a detailed review later on)

Kishore Gandhi, LEARNING ACROSS CULTURES. National Publishing House, x+348pp. Rs. 140.00.

Deals with the issue of foreign students in India.

International Commission of Jurists and Human Rights Institute, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTH ASIA. International Commission of Jurists and Human Rights Institute, vii+280pp. 25.00.

Report of a Seminar held in Lucknow in 1982. Deals with a

wide number of topics in a comprehensive manner.

Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, George Michell, and Carmel Berkman, ELEPHANTA—The Cave of Shiva. Oxford University Press, xvii+48pp.+75 plates, Rs. 25.00.

The book contains three descriptive essays by three well-known authorities in the field of Indian Art and numismatics. The photographs taken especially for this volume.



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Vikas, pp. 447 Rs. 95

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Hare Krishna Sect Vikas

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# Indian Book Chronicle

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## Two Books in One ?

Pursuit of knowledge in economics seems to go through a cycle of three stages: first, certain broad, insightful but *ad hoc* observations are made; second, working backward, there begins a search for theoretical rationale of those propositions in terms of an optimizing behaviour of economic agents, usually, at a micro level; third, the whole thing is superseded as anomalies crop up both at theoretical and empirical levels, and yet another series of propositions suggest themselves.

Two examples should suffice. The law of demand first appeared as a common sense statement derived from every day experience. Then came theories of marginal utility, revealed preference, and all that, to give it a theoretical mooring. Finally, in these days of Arrow-Debreu general equilibrium and Sen paradox hardly any one talks of it any more. To take another example, consider the case of monetary theory. In 1935 Hicks gave an eloquent call for a 'marginal revolution' in this branch of economics. As he complained, anything seems to go in a subject where propositions do not have to be grounded in someone's optimizing behaviour and where shrewd but casual empiricisms and analogies to mechanics or thermodynamics or some such thing take the place of inferences from utility and profit maximization. Subsequent works on money, by such authors as Hicks, Tobin, Friedman, paid due respect to Hicks' dictum.

## EXPECTATIONS

Development economics, the author of this book complains, has suffered from a permissive atmosphere of "anything goes"; the literature is full of "preconceived cliches and anecdotal anarchy". The book under review, we are told, was born out of this sense of frustration. It attempts, in its own words, to provide some balance, however tenuous, between formal theoretical analysis and statistical testing, and also between rigorous quantitative analysis and a more qualitative probing into the nuances of agrarian relations and their sociological-institutional background. And in course of that pursuit, it admittedly uses neoclassical-looking tools. Its quest for the optimizing microfoundation of aggregative agrarian behaviour reminds us of Hicks' 1935 call in another context mentioned above. One therefore turns the pages of the book with great expectation.

There are sixteen chapters in the book classified into three parts in accordance with the title of the book. The part on land has five chapters; and it is this segment of the book which comes closest to meet the announced objectives. It interestingly blends theoretical exploration of optimizing behaviour with statistical investigation into the Indian rural scene. But then its concentration, in fact the sole concern, is on a theme which has a limited significance in the total landscape. It is concerned with land lease, more specifically share cropping. But the extent of land under tenancy is relatively small (less than 20 per cent of all cultivated area in north India) according to official data, and it is evidently declining. Never-

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\*Pranab K. Bardhan, Land, Labour and Rural Poverty : Essays in Develop-  
ment Economics, pp. ix+252, Oxford University Press, 1984, Rs. 120.00



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theless, the five chapters devoted to the analysis of land lease constitute perhaps the brightest spot of the book.

The reader would presumably find the six chapters, grouped under the heading "agricultural labour", somewhat incoherent. Statistical analysis in ch. 1 shows that supply of agricultural labour has no significant relationship with wage rate, but the theoretical model on 'wages and unemployment' in ch. 4 assumes "the wage elasticity of labour supply to be a positive constant". It seems that, true to the empirical finding if labour supply is made invariant to wage rate, much of the so-called neoclassical-looking tools, that the book applies, would cease to be useful.

## A FLAIR OF UNITY

This book puts together some of the published articles of the author, now rewritten to give them a flair of unity. In the process, consistency has suffered on occasions. Most of the chapters are individually interesting; but together they do not always mesh. For instance, apart from the example given above, the book at one place says that a substantial part of the consumption loans taken by tenants is interest free. At the same time it is recognised that rural markets are interlinked. A question therefore, arises whether interest is realized in some other form in some other market where both the tenant and the creditor landlord again are involved. Besides, with regard to interest, several other questions can be raised. What is the meaning of the statement that "nearly half of these consumption loans are interest-free"? (p. 122) If you borrow one kg of rice in lean season and return the same in kind in the post-harvest season, does it mean interest rate is zero? No, it signifies a negative interest rate. Because post-harvest price of rice is lower than the earlier price. Alternatively, consider the case where transactions are done in terms of money value. A loan of rice worth Rs. 10 in lean season repaid in rice worth the same Rs. 10 in post-harvest season has a zero rate of interest in money terms; but it has a positive rate of interest in terms of rice. The distinction between own rate of interest of a commodity and the money rate of interest has been highlighted in Keynes' *General Theory*, ch. 17. The point is crucially relevant in the present context, but the book under review seems to be oblivious to it.

"In our sample of 109 villages reporting tenancy in West Bengal, not a single tenant reported money lending as a principal occupation of his landlord". (p. 124; emphasis in the original). The author puts considerable emphasis on this finding and cites it as an evidence against a particular theory. But the reviewer is not aware if anybody has ever claimed that money lending is a *principal* occupation of the landlord. Indeed, no landlord worth the name can ever have money lending as the *principal* occupation without getting into contradiction of terms!

## CASUAL EMPIRICISM

The third part of the book, with the rubric 'production relations and poverty' has an air of casual abandon. The chapter on agrarian class formation essentially presents an exercise in taxonomy. Casual empiricism, decried in the preface of the book, appears again and again in the form of obiter dicta which are found elsewhere also in the book. In p. 120, for example, we are told: 'there is a considerable amount of evidence that the institution of sharecropping tenancy has been adapting itself more and more to the needs of increasing production and profit by enterprising farmers, both owners and tenants'. Maybe so; but no evidence is presented in the book; nor any specific reference given. Or, consider this one in p. 82. 'Although circumstances obviously vary from country to country, it is probably correct to say that today in most parts of the world labour-tying in the sense of bonded and unfree labour is quantitatively not very important and/or is on the decline'. Maybe, the author is correct; but he has produced no evidence or reference. Indeed, in this branch of economics literature, "anything goes".

*Ranjit Sau is Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta.*

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## Solitary Flame

N. Iqbal Singh

Amrita Sher-Gil : A Bibliography

pp. 189, Vikas, 1984, Rs. 150.00

Reviewed by Mulk Raj Anand

The anonymity of artists has been the tradition in our country for centuries: craftsmen seldom signed their names on paintings or sculptures, except in the Mughal period when the court artists, under Akbar and onwards followed the practice of Bihzad and other Persian painters and put their signatures in a corner. So nothing much of the personal lives of our artists is known to us in relation to their work.

In the modern period, after the impact of the West, Indian artists did sign each work and the practice has continued with contemporaries. Still, there is not much writing either by the artists or the critics, about the private feelings and ideas of creative men and women, which may reveal their growth or development in the context of their time. Needless to say, there has been no autobiography or biography of any of the moderns, until the publication of this slim volume about Amrita Sher-Gil by N. Iqbal Singh. This book is, therefore, a very welcome initiative which, one hopes, will be followed by other critics and appreciators.

Apart from the pioneering work it is, this biography is a model of accomplishment, in so far as it builds itself on the internal evidence of letters by the artist, the comments, favourable and adverse, of the writers and artists about Amrita Sher-Gil's creations.

Iqbal Singh brings just enough of his intimate personal knowledge of her into his picture, and remains subjective—objective in his estimate. He was one of the few people of taste in the thirties in northern India and had sufficient awareness of Indian and modern western art to perceive the fusion, which Amrita Sher-Gil tries to achieve, and the new direction on which she advanced in her paintings of the ten years of her short active creative life.

Born of an Indian sage father, Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, and a



Hungarian mother, Maria Antoinette, Amrita seems to have been a precocious child. She took early to learning music and to painting pictures. Fortunately, her parents' eminent relations in Hungary, and teachers in Paris, recognised her incipient talents and encouraged her youthful enthusiasms. She had the advantage of a cultured home. She travelled to Italy and France in her teens. And she studied art in the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, under Prof. Lucien Simon, who was a post-Impressionist, and probably instilled in her the ethos of the revolutionary Paul Cezanne, one of whose main contributions to modern art was the emphasis on the essence of 'substance' in paintings as the basis of construction.

#### PUNJABI TEMPERAMENT

When she came to India the inherited Punjabi temperament came through in the warmth, impressionability and euphoria about life. She immediately responded to the colours around her, vivid even when the surroundings were sordid. Trained to transform the model in Paris, she applied her awareness of the value of formal design to the significant impacts made on her highly sensitive awareness in paintings of the poor, and the lonely, like *Hillmen*, *Hillwomen*, and *The Bride*, to name only a few. She always denied her concern with message in paint. But it seems to the present reviewer that, in so far as she chose mostly the lowly and the despairing as her subjects, she had been impressed by the involvement of the writers and artists of the thirties with the human condition in Europe, specially in France.

In her early paintings, she attempted to synthesise western technique with the human figures of India, almost in the way in which Gauguin had transformed his knowledge of the model with the colours of Tahiti. Naturally her novel paintings were misjudged by most traditionalist Indians as Western-oriented.

The derision of the critics became more acute as she impetuously, but honestly, dubbed the nationalistic paintings of the Bengal school of Abanindranath Tagore and Nandlal Bose, built on the revival of Ajanta and Mughal

miniature techniques, as effete. She accused 'Indian renaissance' painters who used soft colour washes on handmade paper to achieve 'spiritual effects,' as revivalists.

She was equally against the academic photographic naturalism promoted in western India by Prof Gladstone Solomon and others in the JJ School of Art in Bombay. So her flame was nearly smothered by the smoke of the smouldering fires of Indian artistic practice.

She sought sustenance from a few discerning critics like Karl Khandalawala, Charles Fabri, Prof. Tandon, Diwan Chaman Lal and his wife Helen, as also from artists like B Sanyal and appreciators like Iqbal Singh, Rashid Ahmed, Eric Denson, and A. S. Bokhari.

Conscious of her own western hangovers and the possible weaknesses of her earlier experiments, she went to Ajanta and Cochin to absorb the lessons of the great ancient wall paintings. And, by instantaneous absorption of whatever technical lessons she could learn, she produced the intense south Indian trilogy *Villagers going to Market*, *Brahmacharis*, and *fruit Vendors*, which raised her work to heights of splendour in contemporary Indian art, and made her first among the experimentalists.

Amrita Sher Gil's new way of handling paint startled quite a few artists among the young, though she could hardly sell a painting through her exhibitions in Bombay, Allahabad and Lahore.

#### SOLITARY FLAME

She realised the philistinism and the ignorance about painting of the

middle sections, specially of the rich and well-to-do. She tried to communicate to the students her attitudes in art. But she was a solitary flame, which burnt brightly but was unable to illumine the dense darkness around. In spite of the success she achieved, through the recognition of some of the youngest contemporaries, she was disillusioned even in her twenties.

A few years before she passed away, she had married her cousin Dr. Victor Egan, who was a good companion with a generous understanding of her various indulgences. But their happiness in marriage was short-lived, as she died of dysentery at the age of 29.

Amrita Sher-Gil changed the direction of contemporary Indian painting from imitation of the styles of the past and abject subservience to photography. In her unique experiments she achieved an integral fusion of her twin inborn impulses. And she became an example of a new kind of poetry and courage in the visual arts.

Iqbal Singh's biography will surely earn for her undying spirit, the love and appreciation of many people, for works which inaugurated the new experimentalism in contemporary art.

The daring of Vikas Publishers in bringing out this book is flawed by the indifferent reproductions in black-and-white of many of her pictures, in an otherwise fairly well printed volume. The near perfect designer Amrita Sher-Gil deserved at least a competent designer for the book on her life and art.

Courtesy : The Sunday Observer.

## Education and Modernisation

M. S. Raghuvanshi

Modernising Rural Youth : On the Role of Formal Education

pp. xx + 306, Ajanta Publications, Delhi (India), 1984, Rs. 150.00

Reviewed by P. C. Bansal

M.S. Raghuvanshi's *Modernising Rural Youth* is the outcome of a doctoral dissertation in sociology. It aims at identifying the elements of modernisation among the rural youth, measuring it and examining the effect of formal education in

particular and other life experiences such as marital status, type of family, socio-economic status and exposure to modernising forces in general on modernity. The study takes its theoretical stance from the work of Alex Inkeles, David



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Lerner and J.A. Kahl.

## NEW TERM

Modernisation is a new term for social change. It is the opposite of traditionalism. It refers to the total transformation in the life of the people involving a series of inter dependent and interpenetrating changes in personality, culture and society. It covers the whole variety of institutional areas—family, policy, economy, religion, education etc. The study focuses on individual modernity or modernisation of personality which is a social and psychological concept. Individual modernity is considered as a dependent variable and includes attitudinal modernity and behavioural modernity.

The research design makes use of survey research and comparative method. The field work was done during March—June 1975. The data was collected from 326 rural youths between the age group of 18 to 20 years from three villages which are characterised as high, medium and low on modernity. The three villages are from Galhot Satha region of Meerut Division, Uttar Pradesh. The subjects are Hindu Rajputs of Galhot sub-caste from agricultural families. Thus it is a homogeneous group. The data was collected through interview and questionnaires like attitudinal modernity questionnaire and behavioural modernity questionnaire. These instruments were pretested and have adequate reliability and validity. The data has been analysed with statistical tests as crosstabulation technique, chi-square, factor analysis, analysis of variance, correlation, partial correlation and multiple regression analysis.

## COMMON DIMENSION

The findings indicate that there is a common dimension among the various items of individual modernity scale. Marital status and type of family of the respondent's origin are not associated with modernity. The level of village modernisation score is associated in a limited way with modernity score. Out of the family socio-economic status variables, education-level of family,

occupational mobility of family members, gross per capita income, standard of living and organisational participation are associated with attitudinal modernity.

Among the intervening variables of respondent's exposure to modernity forces, formal education, mass media—contact, participation in formal organisation and outside contact are related significantly with individual modernity. Out of the respondent's exposure to modernity forces, formal education (number of years of school and college education) exerts a profound influence on rural youth.

Formal education affects the value orientation and behavioural aspects of modernity in general, but in the areas of change proneness and sense of efficacy the impact of education has not been pronounced, but achievement orientation and democratic orientation have been influenced markedly by education. Formal education alone has been able to explain about 59% variation in attitudinal modernity and 50% variation in behavioural modernity. Taken as a whole, the independent variables are able to account for 46% of the variation of individual attitudinal modernity.

## MAN MEDIA EXPOSURE

So education is a powerful factor in bringing about modernisation in rural youth. The next factor in importance is mass media exposure. These can help in changing the attitude and values of the rural youth. Out of the family socio-economic factors the two important variables for modernisation are level of family education and standard of living. So the need of the hour is to impart education

to village people and to expose them to mass media through Radio, Television and other field publicity material like cinema shows and posters etc., and through agricultural extension and family planning agencies. It will widen the mental outlook of the village folk and compensate to some extent the family socio-economic variables mentioned above.

In short this is a well written book. It is readable and can be read with profit by teachers and students of social sciences and others who are interested in the welfare of village people. There is a need for such studies in different parts of the country both in rural and urban areas. On the plus point, the design of the study and statistical analysis of the data is sound, there are references to Indian studies which makes it more relevant in the Indian context. However, the reviewer begs to differ with the author's observation on page 61 and the reference from John H. Kunkel (1965: 269). Another point is the commission of index, which is shown in table of contents on page 307. It would have added to the value of the book for the researcher if the modernity questionnaire developed by the author had been incorporated in the Appendix. Yogendra Singh has written stimulating foreword. The reviewer hopes that MS Raghuvanshi will publish the ICSSR's project—Modernising Effects of Formal Education: A Longitudinal Study in a Rural Setting. The author deserves compliments for his endeavour.

*P. C. Bansal is a Psychologist at the Selection Centre South, Bangalore.*

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# Towards Social Revolution

Vasant Sathe

*Towards Social Revolution : A Case for Economic Democracy*

pp. x+240, Vikas, 1984, Rs. 25.00

Reviewed by Devendra K. Choudhry

The book under review is a fine work, sensible in its suggestions, extensive in its coverage, and deceptively simple in its organization. It is neither a polemic nor a primer, but the best single volume work on 'a new economic and social order' or (economic democracy) in India which has appeared, and it will, no doubt, remain a much-read work for some years to come. Having said this, I shall take the reviewer's prerogative and tell the author in public how he should have written the book if he wanted to please this one unreasonable reader. But first, let us sketch briefly some of the major points covered in the volume.

The present work has the distinction that it not merely goes into the enumeration of the strong and weak points of our planning system, but also attempts to provide an explanation, more intuitive than analytical, of the system as it has developed over the years. Sathe's economic formulation plus explanation is not, however, entirely original. It combines the elements, directly or indirectly, of criticism that are frequently voiced by the adherents of the three—Marxist, Gandhian and Nehruvian—beliefs, though the author will probably dislike the idea of being labelled by any particular set of beliefs.

However, it may be said that he seeks to build up his critical economic model from a set of principles which, in spite of close similarity with the principles upheld by other social philosophers, have a certain distinctiveness of their own. On the basis of these principles, the author ventures to look out for alternatives (like the one of economic democracy) in development planning, and what he offers here can definitely be identified as a plan of action. However, the volume bears the marks of the author's deep disquiet with the not-so-developing panorama of Indian society, but in its critical acumen and in its

efforts to allay the sources of such disquiet the book attracts full concurrence and satisfaction.

## NEW ECONOMIC ORDER

It is in this sense that Vasant Sathe's work—*Towards Social Revolution*—is a model for new economic order, so he says, "for all members of human family". The subtitle of the book—*A Case for Economic Democracy*—is instructive "to create conditions for a 'participating economic democracy', going side by side with political democracy, ensuring involvement of the people to bring about a balanced growth of Indian society". Sathe, in fairness, however, "does not claim his model to be a perfect one or an ultimate one" (p. 221). Instead, according to the author, (he has) "tried to evolve a model of economic democracy to dovetail with the political democratic system that we have adopted" (p. 216).

And to ask as to how and why the idea of an economic model came to Sathe's mind, his answer is, "I have ventured to think out and project this model (of economic democracy) as a student of economics as well as of political science, who has been aware of the classical theories of economic growth evolved over the years in the Western world, who has seen how the theories propounded by Marx found their expression in the communist experience and experiment in the Soviet Union...and who has attempted to find out that for the developing countries which have secured political independence and which value individual human freedom what could be the best economic structural model which would ensure individual freedom and at the same time create conditions for a balanced and faster economic growth of the whole society" (p. 213).

## POLICY PRESCRIPTIONS

The reviewer (being convinced of Sathe's thoughtful cultivative ability) is reminded of the lines which Raymond Aron, quoting Claude Levi-Strauss, wrote in his work captioned *Progress and Disillusion*. There, Aron refers, at one point, to France as the "public relations officer" of the mind, which in his view is in accord with a 19th century conception of science: "Anyone with the traditional French qualities of general cultivation, vivacity and lucidity of mind, a gift of logic, and the ability to write, could turn to any field in science, rethink it for himself in isolation and produce a valid synthesis". This is a fitting characterization of Vasant Sathe, as he reveals himself in the book under review, provided one adds that he possesses all these qualities to an exceptional degree. Yet when an active politician (with or without possessing aforesaid traits) writes a book on socio-economic aspects and national policies, it is expected that his contentions and recommendations, generally speaking, will be in full conformity with the published views of the party to which he belongs.

And when the writer, in addition, happens to be an important member of the government, the reader will justifiably expect that the policy prescriptions will indicate the directions along with which state policy will proceed. For instance, Charan Singh's book—*India's Economic Policy—The Gandhian Blueprint* (published during the first year of Janata Government regime) is one such work which, in fact, describes as providing a blueprint for the then ruling party to formulate its policy. But strictly speaking, Sathe's book under review is with a difference. Of course, written by an active ruling party politician, a propagator of the Congress policies and of the Congress (I)'s 20 point programme, who has also accepted and obediently advocated the economic policies of Jawahar Lal Nehru. Not only this but the author has gone to an extent of dedicating the present work to Mrs. Indira Gandhi (in addition to his own parents),



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calling them *trimurti* and "To those who dare to think and act".

## ACADEMIC EXERCISE

Even then the present work cannot be and should not be labelled as a party policy document highlighting the congress policy. Instead, the book in fairness, should be regarded (though Sathe had a distinguished record as Information and Broadcasting Minister from 1980 to 1982) as an academic exercise of an individual political economist. Sathe's work bears the character of an analytical treatise in which factual descriptions are supported by selected statistics and conclusions are reinforced by the quotations of supporting opinions. "For instance", Sathe writes:

"There is a marked improvement, yet, we cannot ignore the realities of the distortion when we try to find out" (quoting Jawaharlal Nehru to strengthen his statement) as to where the whole growth brought about as a result of planned activity had gone. We shall see the staggering reality that the growth has remained concentrated in the hands of the few, leaving the vast majority of our population deprived of not only the benefits, but even the opportunities of development" (p. 77).

The author wants to explain the social contents of Indian Planning and also to examine the magnitude of achievements in different sectors. The goal of planning is development with social justice. The main target of Planning in India is to deal with poverty and inequality. Has Indian Planning resulted into social and economic changes? If yes, then how much change, and if not, then, why so? The author has made use of some statistical indicators to show the changes-towards social revolution. The book under review appears to be closer to the series of popular propaganda.

If India is conceived as socio-political body, the work fails to say anything on the conceptual and theoretical level. India does not mean only some schemes, systems or models. India consists of social-326

cultural fabrics—these constituents cannot be kept aside when we talk of India-towards social revolution. The author has done a commendable job by neither pronouncing on any focal point nor driving arguments towards any conclusions. The book has been divided into seven chapters: viz. A philosophy of life, The Political System, The Economic System, Some Aspects of the Indian Economy, The Economic Democratic Pattern, The Alternative and prospects for the Future.

Sathe is most objective when he points out "If we go to the root of most of the problems of social unrest, whether they take the form of a parochial, regional, agitation or a linguistic or communal agitation, we will find that at the bottom one of the main reasons is economic discontent, mainly among the younger people, on account of the lack of economic opportunities for having remunerative employment... (getting) frustrated... Such young people lose patience and cannot be satisfied with promises of a distant future". Hence, they fall a prey to the immediate appeal of narrower interests (pp 77-78). "For instance", continues Sathe, "they start feeling that if people different from them in terms of language or religion or any other identifiable character are pushed out or thrown out, then more job opportunities and avenues of employment would be created for people of their own group. To this basic idea, other emotional issues are added and the agitation gets divested of any rational consideration and goes on being fed and fanned purely by sentiments. "The present Assam and Punjab problem and sporadic communal riots elsewhere in India testifies to Sathe's analysis.

## IN TOTALITY

Taken together, *Towards Social Revolution: A case for Economic Democracy* represents an attempt by Sathe to look at the post-Independence Indian society in its totality. According to the author, "the most important need of the modern age is belief in scientific humanism", which means to be bold enough to question even the very basic funda-

mental problems of life" (p.vi). In his introductory remarks in the Preface, Sathe states that he has sought to analyse the reasons for the economic weakness in (Indian) system. How come that inspite of remarkable development...since independence...we have not been able to achieve a balanced growth for (Indian) people?" To find fault with this lopsided progress the author has put, so he says, "some very frank questions to (politicians), then to the people concerned". According to Sathe, the main issues that arise are,

"Does the present parliamentary democratic system allow for the effective involvement of the elected representatives in both framing and implementing the policies and programmes? Is the present administrative system result-oriented and accountable? Is there equal and effective participation of the major patterns in economic production to ensure a balanced economic growth free from exploitation? With the advancement of knowledge and science, is it still necessary for human beings to be slave of obscurantism and bigotry? And what role do the political parties and their cadres play in actual development programmes? (Preface ix).

## A VIABLE SOLUTION

In the present work Sathe has not only pointed out the flaws of the working of the present economic system but has also suggested, so he says, a viable solution. Putting it into the author's words, "I have tried to present...a framework for a system in which it might be possible for each citizen to achieve the highest development of his personality, both intellectually and materially." (He) has also attempted to suggest how individual freedom can be assured and enhanced in every field and how we can create a social order which could be free from exploitation and extortion of man by man.

Following the advice of an eminent social thinker of Asian Drama fame, Gunnar Myrdal, "envisaging an economic model to suit (Indian) conditions" (instead) of a borrowed one emerging from



Western economic theories)... (he has) propose (ed) a model of participatory economic democracy" to be in conformity with, and capable of sustaining, political democracy. Sathe's contention in doing this is that (t) he adoption of such a participatory economic democracy would ensure a much faster growth of productivity for every individual and automatically of the Gross National Product (GNP)". By this he also means that in such a system where democracy is based on economic participation, "the economy must also be of the people, by the people, and for the people" and not in the name of the people, by a few, for the benefit of the fewer, which is what it is today?" (p.x) The author, though cautiously, invited "some (right) thinking people" to debate on the issues in the book.

#### ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

Sathe is soberly hopeful rather than wildly optimistic and he believes that in the future "such a system is not impossible to evolve, (the) only thing required for its evolution is the strong commitment on the part of politicians, bureaucrats and general public".

That is what the book intends to present, an 'economic democratic model' for achieving all-round growth and harmony by means of peaceful social revolution". Sathe's *trimurti* concept for Indian society as *A Case for Economic Democracy* is, in fact, society *Towards Social Revolution*. "keeping in view the Indian ethos", Sathe has based his model on the *trimurti* concept, "the three factors involved in the economic activity, namely, (i) the entrepreneur (ii) the financing institutions and (iii) labour, would have an equal say in management. He has also described in detail the various aspects that such a model would involve. Not only this, the author has also dealt with the proposed roles of the different segments of society in the functioning of such a model which, he believes, would result in a "prosperous egalitarian democratic society".

"Beginning from an historical perspective" says the blurb, "the author traces the development of society through the ages, and

propounds a basic philosophy of life, i.e. the necessity of questioning at all stages and not accepting anything as the ultimate". He decries the fact that the "intellect has been made subservient to the dictates of religious dogmas, superstitions and beliefs which continue to dominate despite tremendous scientific progress". He asserts that the "fight against poverty and ignorance should be on a rational and economic basis and not on a communal or regional basis", the latter "would engender fissiparous tendencies, threatening the very unity of the nation". The work under review also analyses the Indian political and economic systems, "with particular emphasis on the role of peoples representatives (M.Ps and M.L. As) and party cadres in the implementation of development programmes".

#### THEORETIC REFLECTIONS

The volume offers philosophical and theoretic reflections on the theme of economic development, drawing upon recent thinking and planning. Taking cue from J. R. Lowell's saying "they are slaves who are not be in right with two or three", Sathe finds himself in some respect "on a common wavelength with the writings and thoughts of Gunnar Myrdal, Raul Prebisch and Jawahar Lal Nehru". He seems to have studied in depth specific economic problems, that is what he says, relating, for instance, to small and big industries, monstrous growth of black economy (pp-82 85), national wage policy, un-employment, etc.

In Chapter 4, entitled "Some Aspects of the Indian Economy" (p. 106-144), Sathe has reviewed almost all aspects of Indian economy (in two parts) in a very precise but intelligent manner. Starting from the achievements of planning in India, the author goes on divulging the gaps between targets and achievements in industrial and agricultural sectors. In Chapter 5, "The Economic Democratic Pattern" (pp. 145-176) the author "asks for remedy or solutions of the present economic malady". Chapter 6, 'The Alternative', (pp. 177-216) is the most informative, suggestive and cons-

tructive chapter in the book, it is the one in which the author looks out for an alternative, here in these pages he has offered a plan of action (which requires to be carefully studied for much practical wisdom).

According to Sathe, "the broad picture of the futuristic national economic scene that would comprise only two natural sectors—i.e., organised sector and self-employed sector and the present "artificial division of entire national economy into the public and private sectors is intended to be abolished" (p. 177). In this proposed *trimurti* model, what is proposed by the author is that the entire labour in the form of (1) entrepreneurship and organising capability (2) intelligent studied contribution by the scientific, engineering and technical experts (3) managerial skills developed by some members of society and (4) technical, clerical and unskilled potential of the other members would work cohesively as equal partners and, in the very process of production, the surpluses generated would be paid equitably, though not equally, to each category" (p. 177).

#### INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

And this economic democratic system (EDS) "not only ensures individual freedom but positively encourages it". For "it gives recognition and full scope to individuals engaged in trade and commerce; it also gives full freedom and encouragement to people engaged in self-employed productive activity, and further, it ensures the protection of the freedom of those who contribute their labour in the production of goods and services". Such a model, according to Sathe, "would create equal opportunities and a sense of participation and partnership for all, which is not imposed by any particular group or party" (p. 208). Sathe believes that it is only under such an EDS that full freedom can be ensured. Why such a freedom is not found in other systems? Sathe's answer to this is that "in communist model" totalitarian and authoritarian control is exercised by one single party over the entire economic, social and political life of the people." On the contrary, "in (his) model...there is the least interfere-



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nance from the Government (to which ever political party it may belong. Not only this, according to Sathe, under this system/model the adage that 'that government is best which governs the least would come true'. This reviewer agrees with the author's statement that "the role of a government in a democracy must not only be to govern but also to promote growth" (p. 209). And this model also does away with the evils of capitalistic structure which is based on the inherent exploitation of one section by another". It is one thing to diagnose blindness, another to restore sight.

This volume, although written by a political economist (so he claims) turned politician (or vice versa), is well worth the time of any serious social scientist, especially the journalistic social scientists. It owes its original inspiration to two political economists' works, namely *Economic theory* (Gunnar Myrdal) and *Towards a Theory of Change* (Raul Prebisch). These two works which the author has very frequently quoted in the present work "emphasise the need for fresh thinking and the need for a change in the economic system" (p. 204).

## TWO MODELS

This reviewer would also like to point out that Sathe's 'participatory economic democracy' model is very similar to Enrique Oteiza and Francisco Sercovich's 'collective self-reliance' (CSR) model. Let us examine whether CSR is a viable alternative. As a first approximation into the process that might originate a development strategy, any attempt in this direction must depend on an initiative originating in India itself and this implies a process of internal social transformation (towards social revolution as Sathe calls it) swinging fresh social forces behind an alternative development model. What could be this alternative alliance, of social groups that might confront the established dependent order in a peripheral country like India? According to the CSR model, two other main approaches exist to this problem."

One poses the question in terms of alliances between elites and

power groups, assuming that power can be redirected by a recombination of the top layers of society. The other tends to see the problem as inevitably involving the working class, or the majority of the population, or the masses, together with *avant-garde* minorities, mobilizing contradictions that may result from the specific characteristics of the historical processes. Both approaches would pay attention to the specificity of the historical process of any particular country, say India, but obviously, the first is elitist and the second more revolutionary. This reviewer has made mention of a CSR model, just to give an example, in order to indicate the difficulties which are normally confronted (both in real processes and in their analyses) trying to keep control of a country's economic destinies from within and, of course, from without.

And finally Sathe appeals to the intelligentsia and the youth like this:

"Anyway, I know, I cannot appeal to the vested interests,

who probably, in spite of themselves, may not be able to free themselves from the gilded cage in which they (are) imprisoned. I am, therefore, trying to appeal to the intelligentsia and to the younger people who are still comparatively free and who are not yet drugged or poisoned by the 'practical wisdom' of acquiring black money. I want to appeal to those who still feel that we can and we must survive as a nation, that we can bring about an all-round growth of our people, that along with political democracy, we can introduce a structure of economic democracy, creating adequate opportunities of growth for all our people, that we can administratively create conditions which would allow the growth of industries, ensure productive activity at all levels and improve the quality of life of our entire people, giving scope for development and growth in all fields including culture, art, literature and sports. My appeal is to those who have not only the confidence but the will, even in

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the name of pragmatism and realism, to think in terms of all-round growth of our people and not the growth of only a few at the cost of many. I want to appeal to those who are willing to see, even from a selfish point of view, that when the growth of the whole nation takes place, there are some opportunities of every individual and there is greater satisfaction of achievement. It should not be difficult for any rational man, even with ordinary common sense, to recognise this" (p. 205)

In this appeal and an attempt to analyse disputed problems of economic life and to understand them from a present day perspective, Sathe is particularly sharp when he talks of unaccountable (or black) money. Sathe's formulations of the problem (in the form of appeal) finds, to quote K.N. Kabra, "the operation of black money/economy is pernicious and there is nothing illegitimate or wishful about the basic objectives of subjecting individual freedom to the kinds of social controls which the Indian Constitution, political and legal systems attempt". However, this statement means that the ruling structure presides over the black market less as an impersonal monitoring agency than as a partner with vital interests at stake, who enjoys the greatest privileges under black market conditions? No one but the politicians of all shapes and sizes (sorry Mr. Minister, I must say this), the policy management, representing in one, but the fulness of power in the land. This has made the development experience greatly derive from, and contribute directly to, the phenomena of black money.

It also makes him say,

"I am, therefore, appealing to every man who has a thinking faculty and who has not yet surrendered it to the nearest godman. I am appealing to every thinking man who has confidence in the intelligence of the human being and who knows that the human being, even as a part of the universal energy, is capable of mastering the environ-

ment, piercing space, fathoming the depths of the ocean, conquering the coldest regions of Antarctica, landing on the moon and probably colonising it, building space-stations, prolonging life through genetic engineering and thus seeking knowledge and harmony with the entire universe. My appeal is to the person who refuses to surrender and who has confidence in his capacity to overcome all burdens, to climb Mount Everest and to walk the length and breadth of the Himalaya—it is to this category of men and women that I address myself with the confidence that if they are determined, they can shake the people out of their lethargy and complacency and put an end to the dreaded disease of personal aggrandisement and narrow selfish interests and greed. It is these people who can confront the so-called pragmatists and realists, who are nothing but greedy monsters and expose their true form by tearing off the masks of hypocrisy from their faces. It is these persons of reason and courage, who by the very force of their rationality can break down narrow walls and raise the people to wider horizons" (p. 207).

This reviewer should be excused for quoting such long quotes from the book under review. However, it may be said that the author writes in a way which will make *Towards Social Revolution* accessible to both social scientists and non-academic public. He demonstrates that it is possible to employing mystifying theoretical jargon. More researches (of course, not only from politicians) should emulate Sathe's way of reporting his formulations. In fairness, the author achieves clarity not just because of a straightforward style but also because he knows just what he wants to say.

#### IMPLEMENTATION?

This reviewer has not made a special study of economic theories/systems, so he is not qualified to say how far Sathe has justified in generalizing his case of 'economic democracy' towards social revolution. However, whatever its specific features, such an alternative model is likely to require the revolutionary

transformation of society from below for its implementation. And, who can do so? Of course, the government! Who is in such a 'position' in the government? Of course, Mr. Sathe, it is you who can do it. Since you believe in thinking thoughtfully. I hope you also wish to believe in thoughtful acting (by this I mean action).

Whatever the case, Sathe has written a lively book, combining a social science perspective with the practice of allowing himself ample opportunity to speak of himself, his countrymen and entire humanity. I hope it is as widely read as it deserves to be.

#### UNUSUAL QUALITIES

This book has, however, some unusual qualities. It tries to consider growth and harmony of means of 'peaceful' social revolution. This reviewer fails to understand the differences between the social revolution and 'peaceful' social revolution. Why not social revolution only (why a peaceful and not only a social) revolution? It is highly empirical. It begs, however, for a methodological updating, which is an extraordinary thing to have to say about a book newly published.

The arguments of this book range very very widely. This reviewer has only been able to touch on a few of the important issues this raises. Its thesis is an important and interesting one and it appears that the question of developmental model and of *Trimurti* concept would receive due attention from social scientists.

However, this is also an unsatisfactory work. To say that in many ways Sathe's economic model is different from Charan Singh's 'blueprint' or from what two political economists say about the concept of 'trusteeship' really does not get us very far, unless it can be shown that the way in which it is different, are of vital importance. To accept the relevance of Sathe's arguments is not to accept the relevance of his model. Can it be that, in studying the past anthropology and sociology are good servants but bad masters, leading us to consider a wide range of interesting topics such as family structure, omitted by the dry formulation of conventional economic



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history; but incapable in the long run, of providing us with concepts capable of adequately explaining the information thus gained? Sathe's approach cannot explain why society changed, although it can indicate on what a wide front change took place and that in itself is valuable.

In the end this precisely written and well-produced book is both a tribute to Sathe's scholarship and an example of the shortcomings of social history without politics: This is a laudable achievement in its own right, and all the more so in an age which constantly threatens to mistake jet-set journalism for knowledge and science.

There is, however, evidence of

writing in a hurry. The various sources consulted in the work have not been mentioned in most of the cases. There are no footnotes except a few over here and there and the volume is minus a bibliography; two essential features of well documented work. One may also mention (though the work under review is wonderfully edited and is shorn of any typographical mistakes) that it is not desirable to print 'politics' for 'policies' (p. 83), as the sub-title of K.N. Kabra's book.

*Devendra K. Chaudhury teaches modern history at Kurukshetra University.*

## On Nation Building

Ghanshyam Shah

*Minorities and Nation Building : A Case of Muslims and Scheduled Tribes in India* pp. 78, *Department of Political Science, BHU, 1983, Price not Stated*

Ziauddin Khan

*National Integration In India : Issues and Dimensions*

pp. 31, *Associated Publishing House, New Delhi, 1983, Rs. 30.00*

**Reviewed by Sushila Kaushik**

At a time when the nation is gripped by the threat to its integrity and is grappling with stresses and strains of various fissiparous forces, the publication of these two monographs is indeed both timely and welcome. Communalism, religious fanaticism, parochial loyalties and narrow territorial affinities are raising their heads not merely with increasing intensity and frequency in various parts of India, but the tendency for them to trigger off wanton violence and cause destruction to the lives of the people, is becoming almost a normal pattern. Even as the intelligentsia, politicians and administrators are debating their genesis, ramifications and remedies, the intellectuals particularly the social scientists have a definite duty to put the problem through the prism of a thorough analysis and find out its deep roots, the factors for their frequent eruption and the inadequacy of the measures that have been adopted to deal with them. They need to present alternate concepts and perspectives of this fast spreading

epidemic and the strategies to deal with them, even while the nation is alternating between panic and complacency and is looking for sanity and stability.

### COLONIAL LEGACY

As one does so, one realises much of the traditional explanations about the origin, evolution and continued presence of this disease of disunity are fast getting outmoded. While much of its genesis could be traced to the policies and practices of the British colonial rulers, their continued presence and deepening threat to national integrity have to be traced in the evolving political system, the concepts and policies of national integration adopted before and after independence by the nationalist leaders, and the varied, sometimes mutually contradictory attempts at nation building by way of developmental ideologies and actual policies.

The two monographs in this context deal with two different approaches and are complementary.

The first one is a detailed study of two of the disadvantaged groups in India, namely the Muslims and Scheduled Tribes and deals with their historical position, present social disabilities, constitutional status and legal remedies. Shah analyses the governmental policies which aim at developing the minorities and integrating them into the mainstream, while at the same time stretching itself to preserve their cultural and religious sensibilities. The impact that these policies have had on the internal variations of these communities and the contradictions they have bred in the context of the capitalist nature of Indian development have been delved into. Shah has further computed and analysed the resulting political movements as well as the political response of the members of these communities.

The study reveals that the processes of integration and separation have gone on simultaneously in India. The very participation of the minorities in politics, their imitation of the life styles of the majority middle class and their partaking in the economic development of a particular type have led to their searching for a cultural identity, adapting communal ideology and demanding a separate nation state. This gives the appearance of a communal identity and frenzied reaction; constitutional provisions have become dysfunctional and even harmful by leading to a backlash. In Shah's view only sustained economic development and an egalitarian social order would lead to building a nation in the long run.

### DIVERGENT APPROACHES

Unlike Shah who amasses a good deal of empirical data to illustrate the factors for the ups and downs in the attempts to draw the minorities into the mainstream, Ziauddin Khan questions the whole notion and methodology of national integration and the approach of the majority to view the freedom struggle approach integration with the instruments of alliances, agreements, coalition and cooperation, but never integration or amalgamation. Thus the differences of primordial interests and loyalties were conceded as also the tensions and struggles between them taken for granted.



## INDIAN BOOK CHRONICLE

built a sort of belief structure that had taken, the legitimacy of a multi-layered separatist oriented pluralist nature of Indian society as obvious. "Freedom and Unity", "Unity in diversity" and the revival and preservation of hereditary social structure and cultural values became the slogans for national integration. A secularism based on a combination of all these formed the pillars of the Nehruvian concept of nation building in the post independent India. It was not until the sixties and the seventies that integration was recognised as a prerequisite for national unity. Even as we did so, the emphasis was not on acculturation or assimilation or synthesis, but one of building bridges through ideological consensus, social sentiments and institutional operations like the Constitution.

## INCISIVE

Khan's monographs which is in the form of a collection of assorted ideas, published posthumously, throws quite a few incisive comments which need further development and which could form the beginning of a new trend. His views on the majority Hindu community as one which suffers from minority psychology (p. 20) due perhaps to the long colonial domination, his piece of advice to the minority community particularly Muslims, his treatment of the nature and expectation from the administrative services and the latter's compromise, 'conspiracy' and collaboration with the political leadership (p. 23) make very interesting material for the readers to chew for a long time; or his unorthodox comments like "religion should not be regarded as a unifying force—however much we may talk of different roads leading to the same God. It was not, it is not, and it will not be a cementing factor in our heritage" (p. 15); or that we need "to correct our political behaviour towards the minority communities; they should not be unduly placated with a view to winning their favour".

He ends optimistically, of course, pointing out the factors inherent in the situation that favour

nation building in India. These random thoughts, do reflect an alert and involved mind, on the theory and approach to national unity.

Finally a word on the nature of publications. It is indeed heartening to see the universities in India waking up to the needs of reflecting on the vital themes and undertaking brief but intensive studies on the

various issues currently rocking the politics. One would have liked the price of these publications kept very low so that they could reach our post-graduate students and the wider interested public alike.

*Susheela Kaushik is Reader in Political Science at the University of Delhi.*

## Re-reading Gandhi

Homer A. Jack, Editor

The Gandhi Reader

pp. 198, Affiliated East-West Press, Madras, 1984, Rs. 90.00

Reviewed by Anima Bose

This book was first published in the U.S.A. more than twenty five years ago. It is edited by Homer A. Jack because, says the editor, the world realized that Gandhi was "a human being for the ages, not merely one of the great leaders of the twentieth Century". The present publication is an Indian edition of the same book. Twenty five years ago the editor had presented Gandhi to the west at a time when Gandhi's being and becoming, his life, action and values began to be appreciated widely abroad, "perhaps more outside India than inside".

## LOVE ETHIC

Indeed, the enduring quality of the Gandhian way, the principles and practice, the ethics that guided Gandhi can be measured by the emphasis that the social movements have significantly reflected in the fifties and the sixties not only in India but in other countries as well. The fact that the Civil Rights movement of the U.S. contained direct overtones of Gandhi is well known and universally acknowledged. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote in *Stride Towards Freedom* (P. 97): "It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and non-violence that I discovered the method for social reform that I have been seeking for so many months. The intellectual and the moral satisfaction that I failed to gain from the

utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, the revolutionary methods of Marx and Lenin, the social contracts theory of Hobbes, 'the back to nature' optimism of Rousseau, and the superman philosophy of Nietzsche, I found in the non-violence resistance philosophy of Gandhi".

For Martin Luther King Jr. Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force, a potent instrument for social and collective transformation.

## BEACON LIGHT

Gandhi becomes once more a beacon light in the eighties because the human society is precariously balanced on the edge of annihilation through a nuclear war which is no longer a myth or a piece of speculation to-day. The danger is more stark because in this interdependent world and the present global society one cannot "stir a flower without troubling a star. The hood of the cobra of violence is spread to strike ruthlessly. Human beings watch in frozen fear". Significantly, the principles and message of Gandhi are being recalled and earnestly advocated by a large majority in the area of disarmament. For example, the Green Party in Federal Republic of Germany cites Gandhi in support of their advocacy for



unilateral disarmament, for non-violent resistance to the positioning of nuclear weapons. This age and day are paying tributes to Gandhi, but violence has not ceased to escalate.

Thus, a reprint of the *Gandhi Reader* is a welcome opportunity for many specially the leaders of the world, to take another look at the world situation today and recall Gandhi's life and work. This, we hope will rekindle a discussion of the Gandhian way and nonviolence, and remind the world that Gandhi is not a myth but that he lived in flesh and blood in our time and age.

This book is not a biography of Gandhi, nor does it give a detailed study of his writings. It is really an anthology. The book is divided into 3 parts—chronologically. Part I covers the period 1869-1914, Part II deals with the period 1915-1931, and Part III concerns itself with the years 1932-48. Interestingly, Gandhi is presented in this anthology mostly through his own writings which can be treated as

primary sources, and sometimes, through the writings of people who know him personally and directly such as Joseph J. Doke who knew him well in South Africa, Rajendra Prasad who started his life as a 'Jana Sevak' under Gandhi's guidance in Champaran, Mahadev Desai—the faithful companion and secretary of Gandhi till death, H.S.L. Polak, Gandhi's close friend, Tagore, Jawahar Lal Nehru whom Gandhi chose as his spiritual heir, Vinoba Bhave—whose obedience to the Gandhian way in thought, word and action is a legend to-day, Devdas Gandhi, Gandhi's son, Romain Rolland and Louis Fischer, the man who presented Gandhi's biography to the West which had a tremendous impact, among others.

#### INDIAN & UNIVERSAL

Through these writings the mind of Gandhi which was inclusive, not exclusive, comes out rather well. It was at once Indian and universal—a mind of love, of

understanding, of infinite compassion and concern for 'the other'. The spirit which Gandhi discovered in himself was reaching out to unity, love and peace, strong enough to heal every division.

In his mind, nonviolence was not just a tactic, it sprang from an inner realization of spiritual unity in himself. He did not see satyagraha only as a useful technique for achieving an end. The most important thing was the inner unity, the healing of inner division leading to spiritual and personal freedom. The Gandhian concept of nonviolent action and satyagraha will remain incomprehensible if it is thought to be a means of achieving an end rather than as the fruit of inner unity already achieved. Looked at from this angle—perhaps one can explain the apparent failure which became evident to him at the end of his own life. Clearly, his followers had not achieved the inner unity which he had realized in himself.

Gandhi's principles are greatly pertinent to-day,—perhaps, more

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pertinent than when they were conceived and worked out in practice by him in his time and day. Peace cannot be built on vague slogans and hasty programmes. There can be no peace on earth without an inner change that restores the "right mind".

Gandhi's words and action, his observations on the disciplines involved in satyagraha, his ceaseless search for the truth and total commitment to the understanding and acceptance of nonviolence as a way of life and living, are imperative for any one who is seriously interested in the fate of human society in this nuclear age.

We live in an age in which old certainties are breaking down, the

familiar patterns are cracking. There is a moral coarsening all around. In point of fact, there is no creative flame that can rekindle the human society which is languishing. It is our good fortune that Gandhi was born and lived in the twentieth century and did show us the way of human, civilized living. Perhaps, the *Gandhi Reader* will offer an excellent opportunity to recall his life and work, action and words so that a creative flame may kindle the human society which finds itself in the present predicament.

*Anima Bose is currently a fellow of the Indian Council of Historical Research.*

tion without an integral link with the larger grid of reality. Such poems read well for a moment or two, and then begin to wilt before your eyes like cut flowers in a vase!

Sharat Chandra's South Indian sensibility is as much in evidence as his American 'baggage', and the problem is to evoke the spirit of Brahminical India through an evolved rhetoric. The novelist, Raja Rao, for instance, does it remarkably well in *Kanthapura* so that the curves and inflections of native thought are rendered in a language honed for the purpose. In any case, in Sharat Chandra's verse, the deeper rhythms of South Indian life do not seem to form part of his imagination, and he is content to etch out surfaces. As far as I can see, there's no phenomenology of appearances involved here as it is, say, in Wallace Stevens; here the surfaces remain surfaces, and do not suggest depths. My point is that a verse of household chores and simplicities in the end domesticates the 'muses' into a tame animal answering only to a low whistle. In short, a verse of mere observation, dry fact, detail and statement cannot achieve the effect of *still-life* paintings if the colour and tone of things suggest little outside of itself. That's why the New Criticism ideal of the self-contained poem now seems so inadequate, despite its earlier vogue and appeal. I wish though, Sharat Chandra had kept the following lines of his own achieved poem in mind:

poetry is commerce,  
a chase of oracles without hoof.  
The eyes travel unhooked but the  
mind  
is moored to the bone of its lien.

Take a poem like "Death of the Second-Division Clerk". 't's a fair summary of the dead man's small-time fate, and there is a certain crispness about the statement, but then the poem begins to drag its feet soon enough.

The householder was gone.  
He took away their subsistence.  
By profession, a clerk  
In the city munsif's court—  
He left a mortgage on the house  
And payments on the bicycle.

## Poetry as Commerce

G. S. Sharat Chandra

Heirloom

pp. 56, Oxford University Press, Rs. 20.00

Reviewed by Darshan Singh Maini

When an expatriate Indo-Anglian poet seeks to return to his roots and ancestral moorings, but is careful enough to employ the idiom of contemporary American poetry and remain self-consciously within its aesthetic, he can, if he is smart enough to straddle the two worlds, turn out some poems of note and consequence. That's to say, he is able to work out a strategy that keeps the *tenor* and the *vehicle* gingerly balanced. However, where the urge to write 'slick' poems at the expense of felt experience moves the imagination, and the Indian reality is generally pressed into service for 'atmosphere', 'effects' and 'tone of things', we may not expect more than a show of competent verse. In such cases, there is no marriage of theme and word at the half-conscious, creative level; there is no feeling of inevitability, in short. That's at least how I feel about G.S. Sharat Chandra's *Heirloom*, a slender volume of 35 poems. It's the kind of poetry that withers away as soon as the 'wind' that raised it settles to a whisper. Fashionable verse is about

as durable as safari suits or bell-bottoms.

To be fair to Sharat Chandra, there's a fair degree of fluency in his style, and he can strike out a line or an image of intensity, here and there, but somehow the feeling of artiness lingers in most of the poems, and the reader is apt to view the exercise with increasing distrust. The opening poem, "Buckled to My Waist" is, to be sure, original enough to raise interest and hopes, but, it soon becomes evident that it's going to be a poetry of low vitamins, low profiles and low plateaus. Moving within its narrow, familial settings, it's not intended to take off and ride into the storm. I'm not disputing its *donnée* or even its aesthetic; only such poems are too circumscribed to surprise us, at least, for long. They do manage to move gracefully at times within their little grooves, and occasionally to set up a hum of resonances, but essentially, they remain little snippets of memory caught with an indulgent camera, wayside straws that have somehow floated into the imagina-



This sort of dry and cool observation, I aver, does not turn prose into poetry, for here the imagination is not engaged at the deeper level. Or, take "Indian Miniatures" which for the most part, is simply a prose piece chopped up into a verse pattern. While the locale of the painting is 16th century Moghul India, and is appropriately evoked with a judicious spray of Persian words, the breezy American colloquialisms..... "helluva yell", "O.K.", "arse" etc...—cannot but disturb the essential spirit of things. Obviously, the satirical edge achieved through American slang is a poetic ploy. However, when the scene and the idiom are in tune with each other as

in "At the Burning-Ghats", the satire comes through effortlessly.

The priests their fee fixed  
not by gods but by Trustees  
chant standard absolutions  
entreating the flames  
to levitate each soul  
to its proper class in heaven

*Heirloom*, then, is a volume of verse harking back to the more facile aspects of Lowellian aesthetic of *Life Studies*.

*After his retirement as Professor of English at Punjabi University, Patiala, Darshan Singh Maini has settled down at Chandigarh.*

## India's Economic Development

Jagannath Mishra, Editor

India's Economic Development

pp. 161, Vikas, 1984, Rs. 95.00

Reviewed by Rudar Datt

*India's Economic Development* is a collection of articles by distinguished economists, management experts, administrators and sociologists who bring out the essence of their experience to bear upon the theoretical edifice of knowledge that is generally doled out in several treatises on the subject. In this sense, this volume includes a series of lectures delivered at L.N. Mishra Institute for Economic Development and Social Change.

In his analysis of the strategy for India's Sixth Plan, Jagannath Mishra points out: "The attack on the problem of poverty is most effective only in the conditions of an expanding economy... There is, however, convincing evidence which points to the limited effectiveness of "trickle-down" effect... Since growth by itself may not, however, suffice, other programmes and policies have been adopted with the specific aim of improving the living conditions of the masses and to bring about a reduction in inequalities of income and wealth". (p. 14).

But these "other programmes" like IRDP and NREP are not

enduring and provide relief only during the currency of the programme and thus to make a dent on poverty, it is necessary to take up land reforms. "Even a limited redistribution of land can make a significant contribution to the generation of productive employment opportunities in rural areas. But the other elements of land reform policies which give security to the tenants are also important particularly for promoting productive investment in land". (p. 16) This is sound advice. Similarly, the benefits of growth to the poor are being neutralised by inflation. The need to devise anti-inflationary policies so as to facilitate structural changes which are essential for a progressive increase in the country's productive potential is thus a *sine qua non* for a strategy of growth with stability and social justice.

### PUBLIC SECTOR

Two important articles on the public sector are included in the volume. Jagannath Mishra in *Changing Dimensions of Public Sector in India* brings out the

crucial fact that the profitability ratio of the public sector undertakings is 7 to 8 per cent on capital employed. "Out of this 7 to 8 per cent return almost 90 per cent is consumed in meeting the heavy interest burden on borrowed capital leaving a very insufficient amount by way of profit after tax, which falls short of total tax liability arising in the case of profit earning Government companies. Thus, the net return on net worth is either negligible or negative." (p. 29) The basic reason for the prevailing situation is the higher costs in public undertakings resulting from inefficiency in material use, both human and physical. Mishra, therefore, rightly concludes: "Higher cost and inefficiencies in the operations of public sectors would naturally mean spiralling costs all round leading to the inflationary pressures which we have been experiencing." (pp. 29-30).

Raj K. Nigam in his thought-provoking article on public sector analyses the performance of the public sector undertakings under the Central Government as well as the State Governments. Whereas generally the Central Government undertaking are subjected to severe criticism, the bigger villains in the piece are the State Government undertakings. He writes: "If we have a mixed bag of successful and unsuccessful undertakings of the Central Government from the performance point of view, the bags of State Government undertakings contain almost an entire lot of crisis-ridden and investment-wise unsuccessful undertakings. And when these enterprises are clubbed with the Central Government's enterprises, the overall image of the country's public sector gets dimmed and smudged." (p. 102)

Explaining the poor performance of State Government undertakings, Raj K. Nigam mentions: "Financial discipline exists in the most diluted form in the State Government undertakings." (p. 103) Besides this, State Government undertakings are poorly manned at the top levels, their chief executives are by no Standards men of proven managerial calibre since many of them are posted in the public undertakings because of their incompatibilities to hold offices in the mainstream of



administration for various reasons." (p. 103) In an extremely forthright manner Raj K. Nigam brings out the hard conclusion: "In its present form, the public enterprises have spawned new forms of vested interest, in managerial class, industrial labour, local politicians, business interests etc. Their stranglehold must be broken." (p. 108)

#### ECONOMICS & POLITICS

P.R. Brahmananda in a penetrating, though pessimistic, analysis in his article "The Economic Drift in India and a Possible Way Out" mentions: "It is our economic policies that have led us to this crisis. In the short run politics dominates; in the long-run economics takes over. We have played down the long run; we have played down the impact of the consequence over the long run of our policies or of their absence." (pp. 63-64)

Lamenting the increasing capital-output ratio, Brahmananda mentions: "The reason is that in almost every sector the investment requirement for a unit increase in output has gone up and is going up. As a result the economy's capital-output ratio has moved up and today we require nearly four to five times the amount of investment to bring about a unit increase in output as compared to what we would have required 3 and even 2 decades ago. We are not simply a *high cost* economy in terms of resource-input per output but also a *rising cost* economy." (p. 64)

Giving a brief outline of the measures to prevent the economic drift towards a futureless economy, Brahmananda has suggested the following measures: Firstly, to contain the inflationary pressures, he makes a plea for a fiscal emergency and the adoption of SEMIBOMBLA type operations. Secondly, it is no good continuing on the old groove investments. The greatest need is to find ways and means of economising on infrastructure investments. This is the biggest challenge on the capital-output ratio-front. Thirdly, living and functional styles have to be changed. The economy has to economise on the use of transport, fuel and power. The biggest culprit is the public sector itself. Fourthly, we

have to scrupulously curb the influence of parallel economy. All this will require major rethinking on our economic policy.

#### WIDENING GAP

Tarlok Singh in his article "On Eradicating India's Poverty" has focussed attention on the fact "the paths of development which have been followed in India have led to a large and widening gap between the modern or the organized sector and the unorganized sector, which includes agriculture, much of small industry, including rural industry, and a considerable part of construction and trade." (p. 77) The solution to the problem of poverty, therefore, lies in moving more speedily towards a more integrated economy so that productivity in the unorganized sector, in which poverty subsists, improves.

Making a frontal attack on the Government's lukewarm attitude towards land reform, Tarlok Singh writes: "The greatest failure of public policy in India, both at the national level and in all states has been in implementing land reform even within the limits of laws which were enacted several years ago. Nothing has done more to slow down India's progress not only in agriculture but also in broader social, economic and political terms." (p. 80) Criticising the temporary palliatives like IRDP and NREP to remove poverty, Tarlok Singh categorically states; "Now that the problem of poverty is beginning to move into the centre of the planning process as well as the political process, it will become easier to appreciate that programmes which mainly offer relief and temporary assistance, useful as they are, can only be a half-way house. They are by no means adequate answers." (p. 83)

#### CONVERGENCE THESIS

Another essay not having direct relevance to India's development, but of great interest to students of comparative economic system is by Mohammad Shabbir Khan "Economic Systems and Their Convergence". Following M. Abramovitz

and Jan Tinbergen, Shabbir Khan also believes that the socialist and the capitalist systems are conversing, though the paths chosen to reach the goals of a more egalitarian, democratic society have been different. He writes: "The income distribution in the capitalist countries which was very unequal in the 19th century began changing gradually. This has been done not by all-out nationalization but by a gradual increase in public ownership which constitutes about 20 to 25 per cent of the means of production." (p. 117) From this, the conclusion drawn is: "The redistribution of income in favour of lower classes in a sense constitutes the elimination of exploitation; and in this respect the western societies can be said to have been following the objective for which the socialist societies claim to stand for." (p. 115)

Similarly, the Socialist systems, have to tackle their problems more effectively "with the method of democratic decentralisation combined with the high degree of centralised decision in the core matters." (p. 122) From this, it follows that within each system there is scope for reaching the goals of a socialist democratic society and that the cry for fundamental structural changes by the leftists is irrelevant. This analysis is too simplistic. The experience of mixed economy in India with rising inequalities, emergence of parallel economy and no reduction in the proportion of population below the poverty line suggests that the convergence thesis only overplays the role of the state in capitalist societies towards an egalitarian society precisely in the same manner as it overemphasizes the emerging democratic tendencies in the socialists systems.

#### INDIAN VALUES

A. Dasgupta in his article "Emerging Values in Indian Management" makes a plea for developing new social values so that the process of development can be carried forward in a better and more rarefied environment. To quote him: "Japanese experience shows that national characteristics are as important if not more—as technology for economic development." (p. 140) He



October 1, 1984

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decries the approach of apishly following western methods of management in the Indian economic and social environment. He writes: "Either our institutions slavishly imitate what the western countries are doing or frame programmes on the basis of what the present practices in business are, as if the management education centres are an extension of the business houses to preserve and perpetuate their practices." (p. 138) Dasgupta, therefore, suggests

that modern society needs reorientation of values—from conflict to co-operation, from distrust of man towards trust, from working for individual interest to group or organizational interest.

The volume, though small, is a useful addition to the literature on Indian economic development.

*Rudar Datt is Principal of the School of Correspondence, University of Delhi.*

## Letter

Dear Sir,

I am writing now in connection with the review of my book on *King Lear* in the Indian Book Chronicle, dated March 16, '84. I wish Prof. Khanna while quoting my thesis statement had not left out the last part which states :

"My approach while emphasiz-

ing the political idiom neither excludes nor restricts the possibility of alternative approaches to the play. It demonstrates on the contrary, how each approach, despite its limitations, adds to our understanding of the play as a whole."

Yours Sincerely,  
R.C. Sharma

## Books Received

V.P. Dutt. *India's Foreign Policy*. Vikas, p. 447, Rs. 95.00

A comprehensive book dealing with the country's relations with her neighbours, with the big powers and with those political regions which have had a direct bearing on the determination of India's Foreign Policy.

D.N. Panigrahi. *Quit India And the Struggle for Freedom*. Vikas, p. 96, Rs. 45.00

A book which seeks to answer some of these questions; What was the nature of the mass movement of 1942? What were the circumstances which led to such a movement? Did the Mahatma and the Indian National Congress forsake the

path of non-violent action as a political weapon? What is the relevance of the movement in contemporary India?

Birla Institute of Scientific Research, Economic Research Division. *Self-Reliance and Security*. Radiant, p. 228, Rs. 125.00

A pioneering book which brings out the contribution that defence production can make in safeguarding security and promoting self-reliance.

The Oxford Guide to the English Language, Oxford, p. 577, Rs. 135.00

This comprehensive reference book combines Dr. E.S.C. Weiner's Oxford Guide to English Usage with a dictionary, giving between one pair of covers amongst other things dictionary meaning of 30,000 new words.

Paul F. Boller, Jr. *Presidential Campaigns*. Oxford, p. 420 Rs. 135.00

A companion volume to the author's best-selling *Presidential Anecdotes*, highly entertaining which takes note of the serious side of elections even as it documents the frenzy and frolic.

Angela Burr. *I am Not My Body: A Study of the International Hare Krishna Sect*. Vikas, p. 301, Rs. 150.00

The first major study of the sociology of the Hare Krishna movement.

Justice Hardy. *Struggles and Sorrows: The Personal Testimony of a Chief Justice* Rs. 95.00

Justice Hardy who was the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court in 1971-72 gives some refreshing observations on the Emergency, the suspension of judges and the consequent deterioration of the judiciary.

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# Indian Book Chronicle

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## Not to be Missed

This is an extra-ordinary book and the reason for that is that it is written by an extra-ordinary person.

Sarah Lloyd is an English landscape architect who has travelled widely in various parts of the world; a born interloper, as she describes herself. She has been to South America, the Sahara, Egypt, the Indian subcontinent and China. In all these places she spent a good deal of time. Unlike other tourists, she wanted to study each country in depth. In regard to India, for instance, she says, "I wanted to be immersed in India. I wanted to penetrate the oriental mind." This was her attitude with which she came to India. How did she go about it? For one thing she avoided any intimate contact with other Westerns. For another, she decided to explore the country through the medium of her own experience. Having said this she goes on to say:

"It was not pure accident that I came to live in a Sikh community. Within a few days of landing in India I had felt drawn towards the Sikhs, and wherever I was it was their company I sought and whenever in trouble it was they who bailed me out. They rarely let me down. They were manly in a country where men lean towards effeminacy, they were proud and dignified, fearless and determined, passionate and warm-hearted, adventurous and enterprising, self-reliant and adaptable; everything I liked and admired and wanted to be. Jungli, to a greater or lesser extent, was all of this, an archetypal Sikh. I came to know him inside out, his character, his moods, his thoughts; he was the soul of my India."

In concrete terms she lived with Jungli, a *nihang*, for approximately two years. At first she lived in his village in Amritsar district on the Pakistan border and then Jungli took up a job with some kind of a holy man a *granthi* (leader and caretaker of the Sikh holy in a gurdwara as she explains the word in her glossary). His name was Pritam Singh. But she called him Jungli; unsophisticated untamed. The amazing thing about this relationship was that he did not know English and she did not know Punjabi. As she puts it rather perceptively, had that linguistic barrier not been there, the relationship might not have worked out.

What she has to say about Jungli is so warm and compelling that most people would find it difficult to understand. The fact, however, remains that she lived with him in circumstances which are totally unbelievable. For instance, for half the time she lived in a hut which was only 8 x 8 ft., where there was no conveniences of any kind, where there was not even a chair and like everybody else she sat on the floor and cooked in the Indian way. The climate was oppressive and there was utter lack of privacy (more of that later) but nothing daunted her. She was attached to him and she had the courage to stick it out.

What kind of a man was Jungli? One day he asked her this question. Her reply needs to be quoted:

"I thought for a moment. He probably expected me to say good, not

\*Sarah Lloyd, *An Indian Attachment*, pp. 244, Harvill Press, London, 1984, £ 9.95



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bad or very dirty, which is the villager's way of assessing character. Instead I replied, 'Full of suppressed anger and inclined towards violence. Efficient, ingenious and intelligent. Strong-willed and physically courageous but weak-minded. Unselfish, adaptable, straightforward, faithful, instinctive, compassionate and soft-hearted. Wounding but easily wounded, mistrustful, self-pitying, non-analytical and pessimistic. Tidy, high-moralled and religious. A procrastinator and an unrelenting tease.' It took me sometime to think of it all.

It went in one ear and out the other. I might as well have been discussing Indira Gandhi. Anyway he never asked again."

Before she gave this opinion, she had reflected over the situation in somewhat analytical manner. She writes :

"Jungli was like a cat, a sleek black cat. He could sleep all day and night if there was nothing better to do, and work all day and night if there was. He never complained of being bored though, so far as I could tell, his mind was often unoccupied. He showed displeasure like a cat and instinctively lashed out when threatened or insulted. Like a cat (and like other villagers) he showed a disarming aptitude for insincere flattery to get something he wanted. And like a cat he was oblivious of his own nature, and of mine. He believed in me, trusted me, never criticized me and never spoke ill of me to others. My past didn't concern him, for it was outside his experience and therefore meaningless, and he made no attempt to understand what I did or said. He was unable to sense my feelings, except when I was hungry—he knew when I was hungry all right. He never used me in a mercenary way and had no shame in doing women's work; if I was ill he did everything for me. All he knew about me, he said, was that I was his friend."

One thing significant had happened meanwhile between the two of them. At one point Jungli thought that they could both go to England and live there. One day he said :—

"You could do your work and I could stay at home and look after the house and grow vegetables and bring up the children. Had I wanted to get married it might have been a sensible arrangement. But I did not. I tried to say, as gently as I could, that I wasn't sure if it would work. I was very fond of Jungli and had no wish to leave him. But marriage was another thing.

Jungli was wounded to the core. Hope and faith were essential to him; there was no room in his life for doubt. After this our joy was clouded. I lived for the present—always had done—but Jungli, like the village feared for his future. He swallowed a large lump of opium and crashed out on his charpoy.

I still had no idea that Jungli was addicted to opium, that he took it every day. He swallowed it when I wasn't looking, and its physical manifestations were not very apparent. For perhaps a year I remained unaware of the depth of Jungli's dependence on the drug; ignorant of its transforming effect on his life."

If anybody chooses to conclude from what is quoted above that the author was some kind of an odd person, it would be a totally wrong conclusion to draw. She was a highly sophisticated person who had an extra-ordinary capacity to experience life as she encountered it. With the eye of a landscape architect she captures the colours and patterns of the Indian landscape and is sensitive to all that is happening around her in terms of vegetation, wild life, social complications and the manner in which life is lived. Coming from an entirely different cultural background, she displays not only remarkable insight, she gives evidence of empathy for whatever she saw and experienced. It is this unique cast of mind which enabled her to understand the rhythm of Indian life as it is lived. She

writes at great length about what it means to live in those circumstances.

One of the problems which bothered her a great deal was the lack of privacy in the manner in which life was lived. Referring to a particular incident she says:

"The thought of having Jatedar goofy spineless Jatedar, as a twenty-four hour chaperone in an eight-foot-square room, appalled me. Since he and Jungli worked the same shift at the dehra they were scarcely apart as it was. I put my foot down.

Jungli was clearly embarrassed by my attitude. He seemed to find it puzzling, self-indulgent and even shocking that I should insist on having some time alone with him, if only at night. To him, so long as I was there too, our, private relationship didn't seem important. Attempting to come to terms with his apparent indifference to something which to me was fundamental, I realized that it wasn't just Jungli, and that in the whole of the dehra we were the only couple with the privilege of sleeping on our own; the only couple with the possibility of anything approaching a normal married life."

This she elaborated further a little later in the following words:—

"Privacy is an alien concept to unemancipated people of the third world, whose conditions of existence deny its possibility. Traditional patterns of living and working are physical and gregarious: the desire for privacy arises from a need for mental concentration or for protection from the threat of a less well-off majority. My love of being alone and my preoccupation with writing remained riddles to Jungli to the last."

Indeed she refers to this theme again and again. At another point she says:

"My determination to discrimi-



nate puzzled people at the dehra too for, as every good Indian knows, one's life is not one's own to do what one likes with, but God's to manipulate as the fancy moves Him, and society's to fashion into the mould it has cast. A Punjabi is carried along by the tide, eating when he doesn't want to because people force it on him, going to places he has no interest in, doing work he doesn't enjoy and spending a fair number of his waking hours hanging around waiting for other people. For no-one can bear to do anything on his own. If there's no-one to cook for a woman won't eat; if there's no-one to accompany him to the cinema a man won't go."

As should be apparent, she was not one of the hippy types. She was an observant and insightful person. For instance, when she was living under the protective supervision of a holy man and Jungli was acting as the chief *granthi*, she had several occasions to observe the holy men. Her analysis of that situation is penetrating, more so from the point of view of a Westerner :

"But Indians need saints, or there wouldn't be any. The Indian mind is channelled into submissiveness from early childhood and open to suggestion from stronger personalities. From respecting—even revering—the wishes, commands and beliefs of his parents as surrogate gods, the adult may turn his devotion towards the guru as surrogate parent. Living in a repressive society people subconsciously search for a higher authority who, in spite of all the opposing forces, has been able to find himself and can express what he has found. Someone who is able to take responsibility for their actions and discipline their weaknesses; someone on whom they can lean when in trouble. People drew comfort from the illusion of being under Santji's protection."

I have quoted profusely from the book because the book is full

of such insights and I would like the readers to savour her writing. For a person like her to come and live for two years and travel all over the Indian subcontinent was an unusual phenomenon. For her to have lived with a person who had no knowledge of English whatsoever was equally unusual. That she gradually learnt to read and write Punjabi and communicate in that language was another matter. It is difficult to conceive of a situation where any one coming from outside could have seen Indian life from within in a more insightful manner. Apart from it being an intensely human story, the book is important from the anthropological point of view also.

As she recognised right in the beginning it was an ultimately doomed relationship. They both knew it. Jungli found it difficult to accept it. With her superb self-control, however, she knew that the relationship had to end one day. With her kind of background and level of sophistication she could not have accepted it as a durable relationship. But as long as it lasted it was an intense relationship and profoundly touching both in its complexity and tenderness. This is how she has concluded :

But in parting from Jungli I had lost my place in a community, and a belonging more tangible than any I had known in the country of my birth. I didn't know I had it till I lost it, and for a while I didn't realize I missed it. But yes, I missed it. The animal in me missed a certain challenge or danger, without which something deep inside that is alert and alive seems to sag and flop. I missed having to defend my territory and fight a

bit for survival. I missed the unexpectedness, rawness and immediacy of life at the dehra. And I missed the close contact with the simple things and processes that made up my daily existence.

India had me trapped. Part of me remained there—not at the dehra or anywhere in particular, but in the abstract idea of India. It took six months and a small and beautiful island of green hills and deep blue sea in the West Indies to shatter the spell.

Jungli and I still wrote. I found it increasingly difficult, for less and less of what I was doing had any meaning or relevance to him. He wrote more often, sad letters that reawakened my feelings of self-reproach for leaving a man who had been physically and politically unable to accompany me. The letters told me nothing, for they were always about me. He believed I would come back and lived in that hope.

I cannot go back: I can only ever go on. It seemed to me that Jungli and I were no longer being vitalized by each other. His lack of reasoning power made it hard to communicate. His lack of enthusiasm disturbed me, his negative filling of days with sleep. And I was afraid of him. We could never have made each other happy, but my guilt still gnawed at my stomach. I knew with absolute certainty that Jungli would love me until his death."

A book not to be missed !

—EDITOR

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# Cultural Policy in India

Lloyd I Rudolph, Editor

Cultural Policy in India

pp. x+129, Chanakya Publications, 1984, Rs. 85.00

Reviewed by Satish Saberwal

In 1975 was published a volume entitled *Towards a Cultural Policy* which, largely by accident, carried my name as editor. Its purpose was avowedly normative: what should cultural policy in India be like? Academics, near-academics, and practitioners of the arts, its authors were all Indians—sketching alternative futures for their own society. The volume on cultural policy under review seeks empirically grounded interpretations of what the state policies in several domains have been and how these affect, and interact with the perceptions of, concerned groups. Its authors, North Americans all, now are, or have in the past been, at the University of Chicago and have done research in India. Papers from a panel for the Association for Asian Studies meetings, 1981, have moved via *Pacific Affairs*, 1983, into this volume from Chanakaya.

Led by the Editors' useful introduction, the five papers offer us vignettes of cultural policy *vis-a-vis* India's vast and rather overcomplex social space. Two studies are located in Tamilnadu: Franklin Presler on governmental say in temple management, interacting with moves at land reform which have severely eroded the financial ground under many of the temples; and Norman Cutler on the 5th International Tamil Conference, Madurai, 1981, seen in complex, variegated contexts: social, political, linguistic, academic, and performative.

Two more relate principally to the North: the Rudolphs on the general scene on cultural policy through the late 70s, with one eye on the furore over history textbooks; and Joan Erdman on the pushing and pulling between bureaucrats and the performing artists over who should manage the Akademis. The fifth study, by Robert Anderson, concerns the disparateness of constituencies for different areas of science—agricultural and nuclear—

and has no regional or institutional locus.

## A CONTRAST

No reviewer can appraise this plateful adequately at the level of detail, and I won't even try. It would be best to stay with a contrast which, relying on Theodore Lowi, Lloyd Rudolph establishes at the outset and which informs the subsequent papers. Policy is of two kinds: *constitutive*, seeking "to define the rules for the conduct of politics and policy and thus the nature of the regime. Its domain is procedure and legitimacy—e.g. who or what is represented; who has the right to limit state policies or acts. In one fashion or another, state policy addresses the problem of regulated conflict among domestic actors" (p. 2); and *instrumental*, seeking "to benefit one or more constituencies without, or at the expense of, benefiting others..." (p. 3). Rules vs. benefits, echoing Andre Beteille's contrast, rules vs. persons. The burden of several papers in the volume is that there is a strong tug operative so that numerous settings where the formal intent (usually following Western practice) is constitutive, i.e. to define

the rules of the game between competitors at several levels, turn out in the functioning to be instrumental, seeking explicitly to affect particular persons and groups in intended ways.

Apropos the textbook controversy the Rudolphs note that "policies are essentially outputs of particular bureaus or outcomes of bargains among officials, rather than the results of deliberate choices based on coherent formulations that provide policy guidance and are subject to public accountability" (p. 15). The contrast implicit here—and generally in formulations which oppose rules to benefits, persons, or whatever—goes over a century back in the sociological tradition. Put historically, as in this volume or in much of the literature in the social sciences, the question underneath this contrast—why we in India should have such difficulties in sustaining rule-based systems—remains unasked and therefore unanswered. The difficulties identified here on cultural policy are, however, more general, affecting other areas of state functioning as well as the social order enclosing the state; and their genesis lies in historical experiences over the long run. A superb analysis of this issue will appear in Sudipta Kaviraj, "On the crisis of political institutions in India", *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 1984, vol. 18, No. 2.

Satish Saberwal works in the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

## A Success

Sarvepalli Gopal

Jawaharlal Nehru : A Biography, Vol III: 1956-1964

pp. 336, Oxford University Press, 1984, Rs. 120.00

Reviewed by Purshotam Mehra

The third and last volume of Gopal's biography of Jawaharlal Nehru is in some respects the most important. For one, it deals with the eight unusually crowded, if also in many ways controversial, years of his momentous prime minister-

ship. For another, it puts 'Full-stop' to a long and distinguished life, a distinct benchmark in our own recent history. At home there is the the dismissal (1959) of independent India's first con-Congress state government. In so far as Kera-



la's was a Communist regime, New Delhi's imprudence attracted unsavoury notice both at home and abroad. There was also a great deal of ballyhoo about the Congress shift towards cooperative farming; not that, in practice, it made any real dent in land reform.

The 'liberation' of Portuguese Goa by the Indian army while evoking hardly a protest at home provoked a great deal of hostile criticism abroad. Few bought New Delhi's specious argument about the inevitability of armed action against a colonial anachronism; fewer still were persuaded that it conformed to India's incessant tom-tomming, at international forums, of peaceful solutions in areas of tension and conflict. Nehru's prestige abroad took a severe blow. In refreshing contrast were the plaudits he won for India's role in safeguarding peace in strife-torn Congo.

Nothing however shook the PM and the country more than the Chinese onslaught in the fall of 1962. In more ways than one, the trauma of a once-trusted neighbour reneging on all that was expected of it and mounting a massve onslaught on a woefully ill-prepared people represented a tragedy of grim proportions that cast a deep, dark shadow. Nehru's own years were rudely cut; in less than 18 months he had inched his way to the grave.

#### COMPLETE REPUDIATION

Nehru's failure with China epitomised in a sense a complete repudiation of the basic formulations of his foreign policy and if for no other reason calls for a sharper, closer, scrutiny. There is little doubt that the then PM was sincerely convinced that India's, and indubitably China's, best interests were served by working out a healthy understanding between the two. For the cause of peace in Asia, if also in the world at large, a strong and friendly China was the highest of his priorities. And in that direction—and towards that goal-India's PM spared no endeavour.

The first rumblings of the storm marking a shift in China's stance may be discernible in its dealings

with Tibet. The Dalai Lama's unsolicited invitation to Nehru to visit Lhasa bore a strong endorsement (January 1958) from Zhou-En-lai who volunteered to accompany the PM during his sojourn. Sadly, it was the last that was heard of the visit! When discreet queries were made for an early schedule, Beijing developed cold feet. Presently, the visit was crowded out by events; the Chinese, inter alia, were engaged in building roads across Indian domain in Ladakh! Nehru's initial reactions were characteristically muted, ambivalent. He ruled out any air or land reconnaissance and at the same time noted that he could not 'possibly protest about the alignment' unless there was clear evidence.

What we might perhaps do (the PM ruled) is that in some communication with the Chinese government...we should mention the Aksai Chin area...It is suggested that our maps should be sent to the Chinese...But...it would be better to do this rather informally. (p. 79)

Nehru's low key reaction evoked little response in Beijing; the fact is, as latter events were to bear out, that the Chinese were on the rampage. In July (1958) the occupied Khurnak; presently, they published small scale maps showing a large part of north-east India, some areas in Uttar Pradesh and large chunks of territory in Ladakh 'within the approximate borders' in China. Nehru's repudiation of Chinese claims was at once clear and unequivocal:

There can be no question of these large parts of India shown as Chinese territory on Chinese maps being anything but Indian and there is no dispute about them. I do not know what kind of surveys can affect these well-known and fixed boundaries. (p. 83)

These mounting strains in New Delhi—Beijing ties were further accentuated by the flight of the Dalai Lama (March 1959) and a hundred thousand refugees who eventually followed in his wake. The Chinese charge of US compli-

city (of which New Delhi was then un-informed) made matters more complicated. Nehru nonetheless was determined to 'harmonize' what Gopal calls four seemingly conflicting objectives:

to help the Tibetans while maintaining friendship with China and to ensure the security of India in a new context without casting off the anchor of non-alignment. He declined to recognize 'a free government' of Tibet in India and requested the DL to function with restraint. (p.89)

Not that it availed. The Chinese, it was plain to see, were becoming more rigid, insufferably arrogant and threw their weight about. A further complication arose with General Ayub of Pakistan dead set on gaining maximum political mileage out of his growing military strength (thanks to massive US armed aid) and India's soured relations with China. His goal: 'to push Nehru off non-alignment and lead him via military accord against China into major concession on Kashmir.' (p. 91)

New Delhi was caught in a deadly vice and it is no mean tribute to Nehru's stewardship that he refused to be frightened or brow-beaten into submission. It was soon evident that Rawalpindi as well as Beijing were colluding behind his back; that differences with China were not 'a matter of minor specific disputes which could be resolved' by discussion. For China's 'dissimulation and and deviousness' were there for all to see. It followed, Nehru argued, that the Indian people should be taken fully into confidence both as to the challenge that Beijing posed as also the issues that were at stake. Here was a point of no return that helps to explain the background to the publication of the first White Paper.

#### OFT-TOLD TALE

It is hardly necessary to rehearse over again the oft-told tale of what followed: Zhou's visit to New Delhi, the report of the officials of the two governments on the boundary question, the mounting



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tensions and armed clashes in Ladakh as rival Indian and Chinese outposts jostled cheek by jowl in what Biejing alleged was disputed territory. The tragic finale was the massive armed incursions of October 1962. While there is nothing earth-shaking in Gopal's pages, a few interesting details do come out.

As early as March 1959 Mountbatten had warned Nehru to be wary of India's growing dependence for political and economic assistance on the Soviet Union. That Nehru kept his counsel paid dividends in terms of Khurshchev's remarkably unusual posture of refusing to take sides on the boundary dispute: the Tass statement (9 September 1959) underlined that while the Soviet government had 'unbreakable bonds of fraternal friendship with China', its 'friendly cooperation' with India was developing successfully. Gopal affirms that China 'exerted her utmost' to prevent the statement which it rightly viewed as tantamount to favouring India and condemning China.

Zhou's later (1971) allegation that Nehru had, since 1956, been

intriguing with the Dalai and Panchen Lamas and with 'big power' (viz. Soviet) backing encouraged them to rebel ends, Gopal asserts

the persistent myth that the entire problem between India and China was a limited territorial dispute inflamed by Nehru's inflexibility. (p. 99)

Interestingly Nehru was willing as late as November 1959 to allow Beijing 'utilize the area in Aksai Chin across which they had built a road...as a de facto concession without damage to Indian sovereignty over that area.' In this, however, he was over-ruled by Pant, then Home Minister (p. 103). In the event, the offer was never made.

#### TALENT FOR GRIEVANCE

Gopal views Nehru's choice of Krishna Menon as Defence Minister as one of his 'less fortunate' decisions. Menon's 'devious ways of functioning and his propensity to create coteries' multiplied difficul-

ties and, even in high office, he remained 'a whining egotist with a talent for grievance.' His repeated offers to resign—June 1957, May and November 1958—Gopal rates as the 'standard ritual of asking Nehru to ease him out of the Government' evoking the PM's 'periodic emotional reassurances.' (p. 130) It is a measure of Menon's ineptness that at the time of Chinese aggression India's defence factories were being geared to produce such items of mass consumption as hair clippers, pressure cookers and mechanical toys! That apart, as late as September 1961 when even the purblind could see Menon had the audacity to tell an air force audience that he was 'not aware of any aggression, incursion, encroachment or intrusion by the Chinese into any part of Indian territory.' (p. 131)

Nor was that all. Menon's 'irresponsible and offensive' ways of conducting official business were notorious. This reviewer had the privilege of serving under the Ministry of Defence not far from Menon's nose and can vouch to a

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feeling of utter dismay, and disgust, with which all those who had for one reason or another to come in contact with him viewed the prospect of an encounter. The Defence Minister's penchant for making enemies was proverbial; his waspish tongue, curt sarcasm and lethal ridicule made no mean contributions to this singular gift! That he enjoyed the PM's confidence and deliberately abused and exploited it did not help improve matters.

Gopal sets the record straight about Zhou's April 1960 visit to New Delhi. The pitch had been queered by China's boundary agreements with Burma and Nepal (more or less on Beijing's terms) Zhou living up to the maxim: 'you make friends in order to isolate your enemies.' To no one's surprise therefore, the visit was singularly barren of results: 'only the stylized courtesies were maintained in a chill atmosphere.' (p. 134) Zhou's offer of adhering to the status quo and of putting forward no territorial claims puzzled the PM as well it might:

To talk of the status quo was meaningless when the Chinese were incessantly pushing forward showing varying alignments on their maps and declining to be precise about the boundary as claimed by them; and it was odd to speak of making no territorial claims even as they were demanding vast areas of territory which India had always regarded as belonging to her.

Gopal gives the lie to 'the persistent rumours then and later' that during these confabulations Zhou offered explicitly to recognize the McMahon Line in return for the secession by India of Aksai Chin in the west (p 136); the unchanged Chinese position being that the entire boundary be negotiated *de novo* and, pending such negotiations, the status quo be maintained.

The 'sole purpose' of the so-called 'forward policy' in Ladakh, Gopal reiterates, was to demonstrate that any further Chinese advance was 'obvious aggression'. The criticism that the check-posts were provocative and looked ultimately to a military challenge was beside

the point: the aim was to 'show the flag' and provide 'symbols of Indian sovereignty.' In a certain sense, however they were provocative

if by provocation is meant India's refusal to permit China to take whatever Indian territory she coveted without resistance... (the posts) might halt the flow of Chinese encroachment and help to create a climate where good sense would prevail and negotiations could begin. It was a no-risk action which China could hardly have viewed as a threat. (p 138-39)

#### TRAGEDY OF ERRORS

The armed conflict with China appears in retrospect as the climax in a tragedy of errors in which Nehru's direct involvement was small. Thus the choice of Gen. Thapar as Army Chief of Staff in place of Gen Thimayya and of Lt Gen Kaul as Chief of the General Staff were made at Menon's initiative. They were both unfortunate: Thapar inspired little confidence; Kaul even less: 'ambitious and courageous... endowed with no sharp intelligence... essentially a military bureaucrat, inexperienced in battle.'

Gopal maintains that the Chinese decision to pass from political pressures to military action was taken sometime in the first half of July (1962). Oddly Nehru's perception was so much at variance with reality on the ground that 'until events overtook him' he continued to hug the vain hope that

China desired a settlement and would not bring large numbers of troops into the border areas while, on his own part, he had no wish to see India entangled in a war anywhere, least of all in the high mountains. He desired a peaceful settlement and as late as August (1962) affirmed that a war between India and China would be bad for India, for China and for the world.' (p 214)

Gopal asserts that he could, contrary to Maxwell's claim—that Nehru, then in London, rejected a

Chinese proposal (10 September) for discussions between Indian and Chinese civilian representatives on their respective control in the Thagla area—'find no evidence for this.' The decision not to get embroiled in any such talks was taken at Delhi in his absence.' (p 219)

The army commanders must share part of the blame for the military debacle. Gopal maintains that they were unable to take the right decisions within the ambit of broad policy laid down by the PM.

There was (he reveals) considerable political distrust among themselves; and the officers in local command produced a scheme for evicting the Chinese which... was apparently a make-believe plan... on which Kaul seized as the appropriate tactics.

Gopal also ridicules the charge that Nehru was war-mongering when, on 12 October, he told the press at Delhi airport: 'our instructions are to free our territory... I cannot fix the date, that is entirely for the army.' The policy to evict the enemy, he underlines, was 'not a new one'. (p 220)

It is also worth noting that it was Menon, not Nehru, who asked the army to give the Chinese battle on the mountain heights. Driven by an inflamed public opinion Menon had viewed it as impossible to let the Chinese come into India in depth before giving them a fight: 'but Nehru certainly was prepared for this.' (p 222)

Buffeted by misfortune, the PM accepted India's lack of adequate equipment and publicly acknowledged that the 'legitimate question' as to our unpreparedness for a border war did not admit of an adequate answer. The best was that in the face of defeat and worse, he kept his cool and refused to be panicked. What cruel paradox that a man of peace, driven by the 'logic of dire event', was wearing the mantle of belligerence! And yet this tragic irony of Nehru's destiny was also 'symbolic of India's civilized spirit roused to action by unexpected invasion.'

Gopal recounts the events of those grim, grey days of November



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(1962) when unmitigated disaster befell the Indian army : the withdrawal from Se La without a fight (17 November) and the fall of Bomdilla barely 48 hours later ! Confusion was so great that

It is not known to this day who, if any one, gave the order to withdraw from Se La, or whether the commander withdrew on his own. (p 228)

## FINAL RESPONSIBILITY

There can be little doubt that, in the final count, responsibility for the disaster lay with Nehru and his government albeit his options had been limited. Economic development could not have been neglected for the military defence of the Himalayas nor could New Delhi have embraced the 'other alternative' of mortgaging the country's freedom to another power by signing an alliance and entrusting the defence of India to foreigners. But Nehru was squarely to blame for his failure to import the minimum of equipment until manufacture in India reached the 'take off' stage. Nor was that all :

the maintenance of tanks and other vehicles was poor, a network of border roads had not been laid down... and adequate stores had not been collected. The forward troops had been denied air support... There had been no planning for a war of this kind, no detailed staff work done. When fighting broke out, ad hoc decisions were hurriedly taken and commanders appointed who were new to each other, and to the men under them and to the terrain...

There was failure at the top too :

Against all normal canons of military leadership, Kaul was persuaded to double as Chief of the General Staff as well as Corps Commander on the battle front when he had no obvious qualifications for either post and Kaul greatly worsened the situation by his outrageous methods of command. He conducted a

battle on the north-east from his sick-bed in Delhi and when he did reach the area, he hopped around the forward lines... (p 233)

The above notwithstanding, the 'national disaster was not a national disgrace'. For one, the major portion of the Indian army had not been involved ; for another 'an aggressive power had taken advantage of years of planning to launch a swift and surprise attack and pushed back Indian troops from forward areas which they should not have sought to defend.' (p 234)

Gopal repudiates the suggestion that, after 1962, Nehru's purpose and authority shrivelled and, like Ramsay Mac Donald (Britain's first Labour Prime Minister) he 'reigned in increasing decrepitude.' This does not wash. For despite Nehru's own brave facade which his biographer buttresses to the hilt the harsh truth is that the PM was now both a broken and a sick man. And even the blind could see that the Chinese had been a mortal blow.

Gopal gives short shrift to the canard, then widely believed, that there had been a growing rift between the President (Dr Radhakrishnan) and the PM in so far as the former had publicly charged the government with neglect of the country's defences:

Nehru's outlook was not so cramped as to resent such outspokenness. He appreciated that the dimensions of Indian democracy were expanded by having in the office of President a figure of stature and independence, and in their own personal relations there was now a fresh element of philosophical discourse. Never had Nehru and Radhakrishnan been closer than in the early months of 1964. (p. 239)

## NEHRU'S ACHIEVEMENT

In his summing up of Nehru, Gopal does not ignore such critics (and they add up to a handful) as Pablo Neruda, Malcolm Muggeridge, Hugh Gaitskill and Zhou En-lai,

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who complained of Nehru's overweening pride and arrogance. For there were others (viz. PMS Blackett) who referred to his 'extreme informality and charm... the opposite of pomposity. He was extremely friendly.'

Gopal talks of Nehru's 'youthful intensity' which never left him and affirms that his

magnetism cannot be conveyed on the printed page but its core was a blend of sensibility and intellectual passion.

Nehru's great contribution lay in projecting the national movement as an anti-imperialist struggle of all classes in which the less privileged should have the greatest weight

committing the movement, at least in principle, to the goal of socialism and placing it in a world setting as part of the general struggle of humanity.

The movement apart, Nehru's greatest achievement lay in institutionalising a democratic way of life :

Achieved against daunting odds, democracy in India—adult suffrage, a sovereign Parliament, a free press, an independent judiciary...With all that it connotes, the transformation of India into an open, participant and non-passive society is a major development in the history of the world.

Nehru was convinced that a capitalist economy with considerable state control and a public sector directly under the state would gradually transform itself into a socialist economy. This however was to prove a pipe dream for

civil liberties were not underpinned by a widespread distribution of property, from Nehru's efforts to build a socialist utopia has emerged an India safe for businessmen to make profits in and for a new class of landlords to preserve its property and enforce social subordination. The effort at revolution carried out from above...has been transformed into the protection

of conservatism with socialist trappings. There has been no permanent and irresistible shift in power and wealth to the lowest rungs of society...After years of planning, development in India is associated with as much an overall increase in poverty, inequality and unemployment as with a steady growth.

Another count on which Nehru has to be faulted was his visionary belief that India's growing population did *not* pose a serious threat. In this he was not only proved 'over-optimistic' but his 'sense of priorities' faltered too.

#### SUCCESS OR FAILURE

Criticism notwithstanding, Gopal throws out of hand 'the angry prejudice' which insinuates that at home Nehru's long tenure as PM was not utilized for securing enduring benefits for the millions of the Indian poor while abroad 'his empty flourishes' finally invited humiliation. He does however take seriously the charge that Nehru's was 'in many ways a premiership of character rather than accomplishment' or that while he set out to build socialism, he only succeeded in consolidating capitalism and was thus 'a political success and at the same time a historical failure.' Nehru's strength, Gopal underlines

was ideas, not in the sense of original of rigorous conceptualization but in reading widely, thinking hard, listening to all who seemed to have something to contribute and trying to work out both ends and means...

At the same time the PM was taken too easily by glib thinking: phrases such as community development, panchayat raj, the 'take-off' stage of economic growth; the two culture' excited and fascinated him. And yet he was successful beyond measure in formulating the goals in every sphere as well as the ways by which they could be reached. He knew what India required and how it could be achieved. He was a visionary as well as a

planner.

Among his 'attractive failings' Gopal lists Nehru's

agonizing constantly in public overall aspects of every question, the open-mindedness carried to excess, the overdeveloped democratic instinct to carry all shades of opinion with him, the civilized self-doubt...

One sad result was that Nehru drifted to decisions on such important and thorny questions as the formation of linguistic provinces, the dismissal of the communist regime in Kerala, the ending of colonialism in Goa and a host of others.

A crippling limitation though was Nehru's inability to administer: to ensure that decisions taken were in fact implemented. This could largely be blamed, Gopal believes, on the cast of his mind: 'alert but darting.' He quotes with approval Blackett's view that Nehru had 'too much of intellectualism' in him. The British Nobel laureate recalled:

He just chatted. He liked chatting about the world in general...When I was consultant to the Defence Ministry, when I stayed with him, he just chatted. It was curious.

A poor judge of men and character, Gopal bemoans Nehru's frequent choice of wrong persons compounded by a notorious procrastination to be rid of them:

He had a weakness for flamboyant buccaneers and was easily led to regard as dash and enterprise what was frequently no more than crooked manipulation...Pushed against the wall, he dismissed Mathai and accepted Krishna Menon's resignation but persisted in believing, against all evidence, that they had been unjustly treated.

And yet in the final count, Nehru

was so right about so much and what he did was so considerable, that those who function in a world he changed are apt to be



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critical about what he left unfinished...

#### SKILL AND SCHOLARSHIP

Gopal's study, and his credentials for undertaking it are unimpeachable, is a work of considerable skill and scholarship. He writes an elegant, limpid English prose, has an eye for a good turn of phrase and makes excellent reading. More, his book is well-researched: his knowledge and understanding of all that pertains to the Nehru era strikes one as wide-ranging as exhaustive. Gopal uses this mass of material with considerable panache and rare discrimination. His praise is not lavish and where critical, his judgment is tempered with care and caution. It is on the whole a balanced account, not only an intimate portrait of the man but also a vivid background of the times to which he belonged. Happily, if he underscores the greatness

of Nehru, Gopal does not refrain from pinpointing his warts and all.

On another plane too, Gopal's work stands out. The talent for political biography in our country is not overly impressive. Admittedly, it is a difficult genre demanding an intricate balance between one's empathy for the subject and a scrupulous regard for truth in all its varied and often-times self-contradictory facets. Above all it is imperative to re-create the age and the clime in which the man lived and breathed. And Gopal's *Nehru*, as doubtless B. R. Nanda's *Gokhale*, make one cautiously optimistic that we do not lack the men and the means for this arduous, never-too-easy, an exercise. More strength to their elbow.

*Parshotam Mehra was Professor of History at Panjab University and now lives in retirement at Chandigarh.*

## The Lingayat

K. Ishwaran

*Religion and Society among the Lingayat of South India*  
pp. xi, 155, *Vikas*, 1983, Rs. 75.00

Reviewed by M. N. Panini

One important feature of contemporary India is the trend towards fission. Groups and communities articulating diverse particularistic principles such as caste, tribe, language and religion are asserting their identities by sharply marking themselves off from the social and cultural mainstream of the country. This book is another instance of the new trend. Ishwaran, besides being a well-known sociologist is also a Lingayat. He demonstrates in this book that the Lingayat religion is built on a radical critique of both the great and the little tradition of Hinduism. According to Ishwaran, the critique is so powerful and positive that it is ultimately transformed into a distinct ideology in its own right. Ishwaran contrasts the egalitarian, anti-caste, this worldly, ascetic and rational features of Lingayatism with the hierarchical,

caste-based, other-worldly and superstitious elements of Hinduism. He also views Lingayatism as distinct from the stream of Bhakti movement.

#### POWERFUL SOCIAL MOVEMENT

There is no doubt that Basavanna, regarded as the founder of Lingayatism, initiated a powerful social movement attacking the superstitious and oppressive features of the Hinduism of his time. He was also an equally unsparing critic of Jainism which was dominant during the twelfth century Karnataka. Basavanna, who held a ministerial post in the kingdom of Bijjala in north Karnataka, preached a simple and direct religion. He asserted that the *Siva* is the creator of the entire universe and pervades it. All human beings and living

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creatures, being part of his creation, therefore embody the *Siva* principle. True liberation consists of realising the immanent *Siva* within us. To attain *eikya* or oneness with *Siva* the religion has developed an elaborate doctrine and a corresponding set of symbols and codes of conduct.

For our purposes it is sufficient to note that Lingayatism, preaches monotheism. Far from prescribing withdrawal from the worldly reality, it recommends involvement in it. It prescribes *kayaka* or work for everyone. The fruits of work, however should be shared by the entire community. Lingayatism prescribes over-indulgence and at the same time it is against inflicting punishment on oneself through fasts and penances. It opposes vedic rituals as well as the superstitious practices of the little traditions. It upholds vegetarianism, while it violates the prohibitions imposed in Brahminism on certain items of non-satvic diet like onions and garlic. Temple worship is looked down upon on the ground that all Lingayats being *linga*-wearers, possess the dynamic *linga* with them, in contrast to the immovable *linga* of the temple. The personal *linga* of the believers is supposed to be a symbol of *siva* that is within us and not a diety.

While recognising that *eikya* is a goal to be attained by each believer separately, Lingayatism stresses community spirit among the *linga*-wearers. All Lingayats are to be treated as equals-irrespective of their caste origin. Women in the community are accorded equality with men and they do not suffer from any of the disabilities and prohibitions that apply to them in Hinduism. The principle of purity and pollution that informs Hinduism and organises the caste system are absent in Lingayatism. It is said that *linga*-wearers need not worry about such considerations because *linga* is always pure. *Dasoha* or community service is prescribed for the believers. Basavanna demonstrated by personal example that serving other devotees is much more important than worshipping the *linga*. Hence the Lingayat should also stressed how a lingayat should relate himself to others.



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## TREMENDOUS POPULARITY

From the above brief description, it is easy to judge why Lingayatism gained tremendous popularity among the masses. This was a religion promising an opportunity to transcend the social and spiritual fetters that held back the masses, especially lower castes, from salvation in this life. The doctrine was popularised in simple and elegant Kannada—the language of the masses in Karnataka. It was easy for the people to follow the simple and yet profound message contained in Lingayatism. The emphasis on community also gave a sense of security to those who were being oppressed by the religious and political institutions of the time.

The Lingayat movement seems to have lost its momentum after the death of Basavanna. There is evidence to suggest that gradually Lingayatism became an establishment religion. With this, it began acquiring many of the hierarchical distinctions that prevailed in Hinduism. A caste-like hierarchy within the Lingayat sect emerged with the *Gurus* and *Jangamas* who were connected with sacral functions—being accorded a higher status. Notwithstanding Basavanna's anti-caste injunctions, the treatment the Lingayats meted out to the 'untouchables' was no different from the treatment the caste-Hindus accorded. Gradually temple-building and temple-worship became legitimate activities for the Lingayats. They also started celebrating many of the Hindu festivals. The many lingayat *mathas* or monasteries that sprang up, encouraged sanskrit learning.

Despite these developments, Ishwaran is of the view that it is wrong to describe this process as sankritization because the Lingayat world view is fundamentally opposed to the ideas of purity and pollution and *karma* and *ashrama* theories. But at the same time he also approvingly mentions a Lingayat freedom fighter's attempt to reinterpret Lingayatism as basically Gandhian! Clearly, what has happened is this: Lingayatism began as an anti-structure movement but settled down later as a movement offering only a counter structure. Its contradiction with the structure of Hinduism was

resolved partly by modifications within Lingayatism itself and partly by the changes that came about in Hindu society in response to such anti-structure movements.

## REJUVENATED

Ishwaran is of the view that the Lingayat religion has been rejuvenated in the present century. He points out how Lingayats have been innovative in the field of commerce and industry, education and politics. Lingayat educational institutions in Karnataka have played a crucial modernizing role in the state. The Lingayat community also became active in politics first in the anti-Brahmin movement and later in the nationalist struggle.

Regarding Ishwaran's observations on the modernizing role of Lingayatism, it is important to note that an individual or a group can play a modernizing role without being modern and *vice versa*. For instance, it can be argued that the South African government has contributed to modernization through its apartheid policies. The policies have awakened the political consciousness of the blacks and coloureds in South Africa and have spurred their fight for equality. I have drawn attention to this extreme example only to point out that we should be careful in evaluating the modernizing role of an individual or a community. The difficulty is further compounded in this particular case. Should we consider the role of Lingayats in the anti-Brahmin movement as modernizing? If we do, are we then to conclude that the heightened caste consciousness that the anti-Brahmin movement has left in its trail is a feature of modernization?

## MODERNITY

The above comments are not intended to imply that Lingayatism is a reactionary religion. For from it. If Protestant Christianity in the West is regarded as containing the seeds of modernity, a stronger case can be made out for Lingayatism.

It is important to note that Lingayatism espoused radical ideas several centuries before Protestant Christianity! The fact is that in the Indian setting, Lingayatism was not allowed full play. And in the present juncture, any attempt to reach back to the fundamental tenets of religion (however modern they may be) and propagate them tantamounts to fundamentalism! To be modern is to be rational and to recognise that there are no objective criteria for evaluating values or value-systems. To claim that a particular religion or value system is modern is to assert that it is superior to other competing world views. The moment I claim that I am modern, I am in fact violating the principle of universalism and hence rationality because I am evaluating myself as rational *vis-a-vis* those whom I regard as non-modern. But this judgement cannot be sustained by the above objective criteria. The same holds for all religions and even some of the theories of modernization.

Ishwaran's study of Lingayatism is a valuable contribution to Indian Sociology. It highlights the importance of studying anti-structure movements to adequately understand the Indian society. This study has shown that far from being static the Indian society contained within it the seeds of radical structural changes. We also learn from this study that ahistorical structuralism distorts the Indian reality. For if we had relied on the interpretation of Manu's *Dharma Shashtra* and other scriptures, we would have certainly regarded Lingayatism as foreign to Indian civilisation!

*M.N. Panini works in the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.*



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## A Useful Reprint

D. Devahuti

Harsha : A Political Study. Second Edition

pp. xxvii+362, Oxford University Press, 1983, Rs. 180.00

Reviewed by Atreyi Biswas

The author D. Devahuti is a pioneer scholar in Ancient Indian and early South-East Asian history. The work has grown out of a doctoral thesis for the University of London prepared under the supervision of A.L. Basham. This second edition of her book, published first in 1970, contains additional information collected from contemporary sources which includes a new gold coin of Harsha found in Farrukhabad (U.P.) and a newly discovered biography of Huen Tsang. She also incorporates appendix IV A—the Chinese text and IV B—the Uighur-Turkish Text of the letters exchanged between two monks of Bodh Gaya and Huen-Tsang. The complete and literal translation of the letters are valuable assets, as they are not easily available to most Indian scholars whose knowledge of foreign languages is limited to English.

The book deals with the period of Harsha and his contemporaries. It comprises eight chapters bearing titles: Source; From Regional Kingdoms towards an Empire; The Vardhanas; the extent of Harsha's Administration; The Principles of Polity; Harsha's Administration; The Sino-Indian Missions and the Death of Harsha; Conclusion. There are four Appendices—The Harsha Era; The Coins of Harsha Sihaditya; Maukhari Coins; Exchange of letters between monks in Bodh Gaya and Huen Tsang in Ch'ang-An (Sian). The account of the history of Harsha and his contemporaries is mostly factual though while dealing with the extent of Harsha's empire the author evaluates the contemporary sources with a critical eye and tries to solve some of the still controversial topics.

### CONTROVERSIES

The most important amongst

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them is the question of the lineage of Sasanka the king of Gauda. There are various theories which connect Sasanka as a Samanta of either Jayanga or Maukhari king Avantivarman as suggested by B.P. Sinha (in his *Decline of the Kingdom of Magadha*) and B.C. Sen (in his *Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal*) respectively. B. N. Shrivastava, in his book titled *Harsa and His Times* has drawn the attention of the scholars to the possibility of connecting Sasanka with the later Gupta kings on the basis of his title Narendragupta noticed by Sankara, a commentator on the *Harsa-carita* of Bana.

Devahuti rightly rejects the possibility of any connection between Sasanka and the later Gupta dynasty as the contentions are not adequately supported by other sources. Of course she agrees with B.C. Sen and D.C. Ganguly that Sasanka started his career as a Samanta of the Maukhari Avantivarman but she totally differs from them with regard to the circumstances under which Sasanka's power began and spread. She explores the possible meanings of the term 'Five India' as used not only by Huen Tsang, but by the Chinese travellers as well. The proper meaning of the term can correctly explain the extent of Harsha's empire.

On the topic of Harsha and his times quite a number of valuable researches had already been done. As early as 1906 when M.L. Ettinghausen published his doctoral thesis of Paris University, titled *Harsa Vardhana, Emperor et Poete de L'Inde Septentrionale*, many European and Indian scholars have attempted to reveal Harsha's history. Harsha had been a known figure in Sanskrit literature and most of the modern historians have given an estimation of him as a literary man.

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R.K. Mookerji's *Harsa* (1925) which is considered even now an authentic book on this subject gave a vivid picture of not only the king's life, character and personality but he also described the simple life of the village folk, the busy and strenuous life of the camp and high luxury of the courts of his contemporary period. He evaluated Harsha as a learned man and as a devout Buddhist. He gave a fair idea of economic condition of India during that period.

### POLITICAL STUDY

However Devahuti, like B.N. Shrivastava, deals only with the political study of Harsha's period and therefore the social, economic and cultural background is not at all focussed. Though before discussing the administrative machinery of Harsha, the author evaluates the development of political theories of ancient India in her Vth Chapter—the Principles of Polity, because she herself comments that "before attempting to draw a picture of the administration as at work in Harsha's time it will be well to note the undercurrents in political thought and the fundamental basis of ancient Indian polity which motivated the action of seventh century monarchs".

She wisely prefers to keep a few Indian terms like 'Samanta' for example, untranslated, as no exact English translation can explain the full meaning of the particular term. In her chapter on Harsha's administration, she traces the history of the term and explains its relevance in the context of her own period. She claims that "for the first time an appraisal of the Sino-Indian missions and the events after the death of Harsha has been attempted in this book." The account is a very handy compilation of much recondite information from many sources not easy of access to the general reader as well as to the research scholar who will find here a reliable guide to the subjects dealt with.

Atreyi Biswas lectures in history at Satyawati College, University of Delhi.



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# With a Theoretical Focus

Omvedt Gail, Editor

Land, Caste and Politics in Indian States

pp. 168, *Department of Political Science, University of Delhi*, 1982, Rs. 65.00  
£ 5, \$ 10

Reviewed by Gopal Iyer

This study examines the basis of caste in the structure of land relations and its superstructural dimension in politics. The attempt is to relate the specific social process with the overall national process in the context of the changing political economy. The explanation of caste as a merely cultural category or caste based empirically oriented studies is considered inadequate in this context. The study is also critical of the Marxist theoreticians who explain caste behaviour simply as a manifestation of class behaviour. It raises specific questions like the connection between 'class' and 'caste' in rural India today and its role in relation to both the old and developing forms of agrarian relations of production.

## INTERRELATIONSHIP

The book consists of eight chapters. The first chapter is an introductory essay by Gail Omvedt where she analyses the interrelationship between land, caste, and politics in the Marxist theoretical framework. The other seven chapters by several distinguished authors are a detailed analysis of this interrelationship in seven States of India.

The basic issues are raised in the introductory essay by Gail Omvedt. She considers that caste cannot be identified with any single mode of production though the existence of a surplus and economic inequality is necessary for its existence. Caste had a very different relation to Indian feudalism and existed then in a very different form than it does today in the period of rising capitalism. The sub-caste is viewed primarily as a unit of the social system of kinship and the broader 'Jati' as the basic unit of the social division of labour. 'Class' is defined in terms of the Marxist concept of social 'relation of production'. Both caste and class are

considered to have coexisted in India since the beginning of the generation of a surplus and economic inequality and the two in fact were interwoven in the Social Formation.

However, the beginning of capitalism under colonial rule not only began to create new classes but also began a process of separating out 'caste system' from the 'class structure'. Today with the dominance of a capitalist mode of production we are faced with a very complex mixture of caste and class having tremendous regional variations. Omvedt considers it as misleading to speak of 'caste and class' as parallel phenomena. She feels that the new form of caste is conditioned by and under the dominance of capitalism. It can only be abolished by a social revolution under the leadership of the proletariat.

## MARXISTS CRITICISED

Caste is considered not only as form of organisation but has also concrete material content. She is critical of the Marxists overlooking the importance of the superstructure, particularly caste which has historically shaped the very basis of Indian economy and society and continues to have crucial economic implications today. In the Indian caste-feudal mode of production, the economy was structured and the surplus pumped out in such a way that it maintained unequally exploited sections of toilers. Omvedt feels that 'agrarian revolution' was central to the anti-feudal struggle but it also required a thorough attack on the caste system itself so that the toiling and exploited sections in the village could gain basic rights to the land itself and its produce. The colonial rule sowed the seeds of capitalist development as well as maintained semi-

feudal structure in India including the caste system.

The separation of the economic and social levels so characteristic of capitalist society began in India under colonial rule. Yet caste and class continued to be heavily inter-linked. According to Omvedt there was a broad correlation between caste and class under British rule but not an identity between them. With the coming of capitalist relations in agriculture the main line of conflict now is between the rich farmers and the agricultural labourers, poor peasants.

Caste is one of the strangest weapons which the rich are using to divide and attack the rural poor. She is of the view that the process of actual proletarianization in agriculture has been a slow one. According to her estimation the agrarian class structure today consists of 15 per cent rich farmers, 25 per cent middle peasants, and 60 per cent of the proletarianized rural majority. It has been generally the development of commercialization, proletarianization, and capitalist relations of agriculture that has determined the shape of the new caste-class confrontation in the rural areas. She is also aware of the variations in the dynamics of caste, class, and politics in view of the specific local peculiarities.

## REGIONAL VARIATIONS

The studies of the seven states by different scholars bring into focus sharply these regional variations. For example, the paper of Jagannath Pathi makes it clear that in the eastern region characterized by semi-feudal peripheral group, tenancy and feudal relations are still dominant. The backward semi-capitalist region (consisting of U.P., M.P., Rajasthan, and Jammu and Kashmir) presents a different picture. The paper on U.P. by Rajendra Prasad is a case in point. He has shown that the changing equations of caste, land, and power relations indicate a consistent and systematic erosion of landed power of upper caste. The cultivating caste peasants belonging to intermediate position, in the caste hierarchy have accumulated greater economic potentials and the Dalits have



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remained neglected. The author suggests that the frequent occurrence of caste violence in this region needs to be viewed in the context of caste peasantry emerging dominant.

The third region is identified as mixed semi-feudal, semi-capitalist which includes the states of West Bengal and Bihar. The study of Partha Chatterji indicates that West Bengal has not witnessed the phenomenon of politically aggressive landlordism articulated in the idiom of caste superiority and power. The contrast of West Bengal politics with the rest of India is emphasized due more to the strikingly different role in the state organized politics of a radical middle class leadership. The case of Bihar by H. Dhar et al is a study in contrast which indicates the crucial role of caste in agrarian relations and politics of the state. The high incidence of atrocities against the rural poor is indicative of the contradiction between the kulaks (consisting of the intermediate and upper castes) and semi-proletarians drawn heavily from the scheduled castes. In the emerging class-conflict in rural Bihar one has to take cognizance of the role of caste in its relationship with class.

#### QUALITATIVELY DIFFERENT

The fourth region is identified as 'high tenancy capitalist north west' consisting of Panjab and Haryana. The paper on Panjab by Amarjit Singh points out that interaction of factors like economic classes, religious loyalties, regional and diverse cultural groups create a network which marks it off objectively and subjectively from different regions. Landowners are Jats, shopkeepers and businessmen are Khatri and the scheduled castes are agricultural and industrial labour. Jat social values have become the basic Sikh values. The social structure of the state on the one hand creates a rural-urban cleavage which reinforces the communal cleavage. On the other hand, landowners and labourers conflict within rural areas provide a ground for the existence of class struggle.

The fifth region is identified as 'low tenancy capitalist southern

and western states which include states like, Tamilnadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Subha Rao in his study of Andhra Pradesh points out that Kamma and Reddy castes have emerged as powerful controller of power at the state level. The Dalits and lower castes are in search of new leadership which is partly being fulfilled by CPI (ML). In the case of Gujarat, Ghanshyam Shah observes that castes are not homogeneous in social and economic matters. Economic differentiations within many of the castes have sharpened during the last two decades. Have-nots are becoming more conscious of their deprived economic condition. But there are no class based statewide organizations which can increase their consciousness and mobilize them for political actions.

The collection of essays is knit together by a common theme and

a theoretical focus. It provides a deep insight into the understanding of the interplay of caste, class and politics in the context of the changing political economy. There is relative dearth of study which analyzes the inter-relationship of caste, class, and polity in the context of the changing political economy. The work of Dharma Kumar, Kathleen Gough, John Harriss, Djurfeldt and Lindberg etc. could be cited among the few studies which have made attempts in this direction within the regional context. The present book edited by Gail Omvedt is a welcome addition in the field which tries to present an all India as also regional perspective to the understanding of this phenomena.

*Gopal Iyer is Reader in Sociology at the Panjab University, Chandigarh.*

## A Useful Contribution

T. P. Ramachandran

*The Methodology of Research in Philosophy*  
pp. xii+76, Radhakrishnan Institute of Advanced Study in Philosophy,  
University of Madras, 1984, Rs. 10.00

Reviewed by P. C. Bansal

The book under review is a revised and extended version of the paper first published in Radha Krishnan Institute of Advanced Study in Philosophy Journal—the Indian Philosophical Annual Vol. xiv (1980—1981). It is a guide on the methodology of research in philosophy. It contains ten chapters entitled—preliminaries, qualifications for research in philosophy, principles and steps in choosing a topic for research in philosophy, stages in the execution of a research project, collection, organisation, presentation, critical edition of works and epistemology and the methodology of research in philosophy.

#### DEFINITION

The research has been defined—  
“as a critical investigation into a

chosen area within a familiar field for the purpose of furthering knowledge about the area selected”. The research in philosophy pertains to: (a) thinker or text based topics; (b) concept based topics; (c) comparative based topics; (d) meta-philosophical topics and interdisciplinary topics. This is related to the three areas of Epistemology, Metaphysics and Philosophy of Values. Among the interdisciplinary problems, mention may be made of the Philosophy of Art, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of History and Philosophy of Education. Metaphilosophy examines the origin, pre-suppositions, goals, methods, results and limits of philosophy by comparing the achievement of different philosophers. Ramachandran is of the view that interdisciplinary research should be based on a ‘focus margin model’ rather than on a ‘balance



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model'. Here the focus is on philosophy and the margin is the other discipline.

Research in Indian Philosophy relies on scriptural text as sources of knowledge. It calls for exegetical interpretation and cannot depend entirely on logical analysis or speculation. It also involves translation and requires the knowledge of scriptures under investigation. The critical edition of philosophical work is a necessary part of the text based philosophical research. It requires knowledge of philosophy as well as linguistic proficiency.

### THREE STAGES

There are three stages in the execution, of a research project: collection, organisation and presentation. This is a nice presentation and it will be useful to research students of other disciplines. Lastly there is a discussion about the relationship between epistemology and metaphysics and distinction between epistemology and the methodology of research in philosophy.

In sum, this book is an example of clear technical writing. It is easy to read and its printing and get up are nice. Students of philosophy will find Chapter one (Science and scientific approach) Chapter two (Problems and hypothesis) and Appendix 'A', the research report and Appendix 'B', Historical and methodological research in Foundations of Behavioral Research by Fred. N. Kerlinger (Surjeet Publications, Delhi, 1978) of some interest. The book is based on Ramachandran's long experience of teaching research methodology and guiding research in philosophy.

R. Balasubramanian has appended a foreword. For easy reference an index has been provided and a list of books of essential readings is given. The book will be of interest to teachers and students in various disciplines, and to those who want to convey their research findings to professional journals. It is hoped that the book will be

received with enthusiasm by academic community as well as by general reader alike. Ramchandran deserves compliments for his commendable efforts. The reviewer hopes for many more research mono-

## Letter

Sir,

Your editorial concern about *Chandrabagha* must be shared by all those who regard literary periodicals as indices of the spiritual health of a society. Mahapatra's single-minded enthusiasm in keeping his journal afloat against public indifference is a measure of his tenacity as well as of his faith in creative imagination. That *Chandrabagha*, like many other periodicals, is now threatened with closure is a grim reflection on our literary culture.

Let us face it: When it comes to literary culture, a majority of our literate middle-class public consists of blubber-headed philistines who wouldn't think twice while sinking vast sums in gimcrack gadgetry (the lewd display of black-market profits in Maruti resales is a recent instance), but would groan at the 'high' price of books and journals. A society etherised by anodynes purveyed through radio, television and the film cannot sustain serious literary magazines. It is not surprising, then, for the devotees of the literary, battered though they are by the manifest hostility of the Culture Industry, to look with envy to the West where numerous literary magazines command respectable circulations.

And yet, I don't think the Idols of the Market-place have completely taken over. There are still some rare and isolated pockets of teachers, students and the literate laymen (you meet them in university and college cafes as well as at seminars) who do not find it extraordinary that a literary magazine should be nourished as an essential part of the intelligent individual's culture. It is to these people one could go with hope. The founding of the Poetry Society in Delhi (IBC, Sept. 1) is, therefore, a welcome effort to reach

graphs from T.P. Ramachandran.

*P.C. Bansal is a Psychologist at the Selection Centre South, Bangalore.*

these interested people.

On a wider scale, we would expect some enlightened Vice-Chancellors (are there any left in the country?) to provide facilities for conducting a good literary magazine instead of supporting house journals with abysmal research standards. Some of the leading literary journals in America (*The Partisan Review*, *Mundus Artrium*, *The Iowa Review*) are based at various universities and lend prestige to them.

We could also call upon our own Sahitya Academy to support literary journals in the country. Without literary magazines", wrote T.S. Eliot in a message to the inaugural number of John Lehmann's *London Magazine*, 'the vitality of the world of contemporary letters is gravely, reduced'. Perhaps the mandarins at the Academy would ponder this warning, particularly at the time they allow the world of contemporary Indian letters to be sullied by prizes awarded to books of dubious worth.

Yours etc.  
M.L. Raina

Chandigarh

## Books Received

Khurshid Ahmad, ed. *First International Conference on Islamic Economics*. Delhi, Amar Prakashan, 1984. Rs. 175.00

Contains paper presented at the First International Conference on Islamic Economics held at Makka in 1976.



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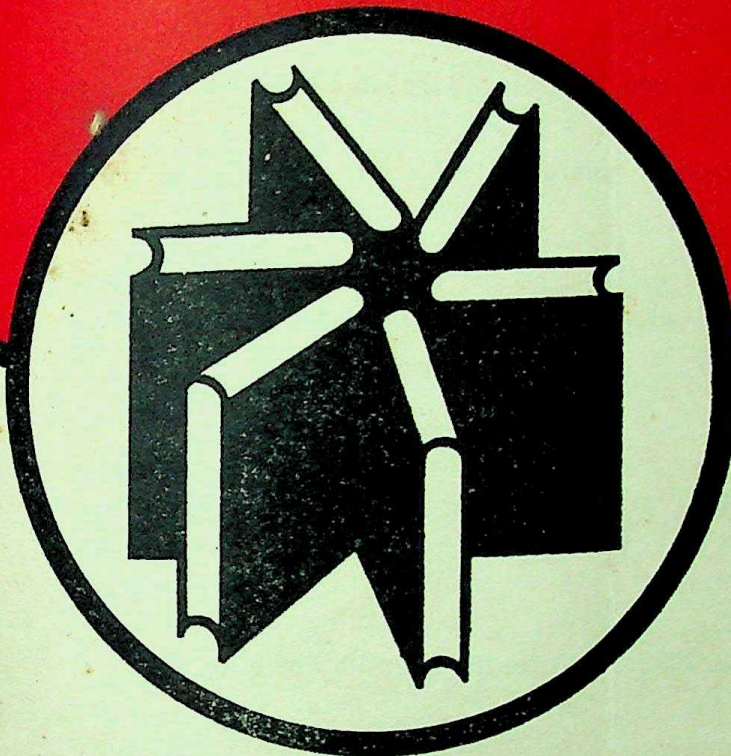
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Jawaharlal Nehru

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Campus Book Shops

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Rabindranath Tagore

Tagore : Songs of Tagore

Wilfred Owen's Influence on Three  
Generations of Poets

Public Sector in India

Image of Man : Ideology and Theory  
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# Indian Book Chronicle

Vol. IX. No. 21, November 1, 1984

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## BOOKS REVIEWED

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Indian Book Chronicle  
2/26, Sarva Priya Vihar  
NEW DELHI-110016  
Telephone : 660738

EDITOR : AMRIK SINGH

## Campus Book Shops

It was perhaps during the Third Plan that UGC grants were available to colleges for installation of water-coolers. A few hundred of them did avail of this offer. In contrast, the UGC has had no scheme at any stage for establishment of book shops in University Campuses. Presumably, no University asked for such a grant and on its own the UGC did not take any initiative either.

In terms of procedures there is little that one can say in criticism of what was done. In terms of priorities, however, there is something odd about it. How is it that nobody felt that establishment of book shops was also something that required to be done? Can any meaningful education be undertaken without adequate access to books? India must be the only country which feels that at the university level books are not all that important or at least these are dispensable.

No firm data is available as to the number of book shops on the university campuses. My own impression is that not more than a dozen of them have book shops. All that a university needs to do is to make suitable premises available. For the rest, whoever runs the book shop can invest. If the number of students is even a couple of thousands, the book shop becomes a viable proposition. In addition to what students and the members of the staff may wish to buy, book shops can also supply books to the university library and in certain cases colleges and other educational institutions as well. In other words, what a book shop requires is an address and some space. For the rest, it is not necessary to do anything else.

Looking at the situation during the last three decades or so, several trends in the book industry can be seen. There was the first phase right till the middle 50's when books were not available so easily. Books had to be imported and everybody could not import them. A licence was required for the purpose and everybody was not given the licence. Fortunately, books were not expensive then as they are now. So if some were available that was good enough. Hardly any books were published locally. It was in this phase that Asia Publishing House made its appearance and began to publish quality books.

In the second phase which began with the mid 50's and lasted another decade or so, books came to be imported in larger numbers. The granting of licences was liberalised and several more importers made their appearance on the scene. Local publishing also began to be active. This phase was, however, marked by one rather sad development. Importers began to sell books to libraries directly thereby bypassing both wholesalers and retailers. Since the margin of profit for importers was exceptionally high, quite a few librarians were persuaded to accept something 'under the counter'. In consequence, book selling as a profession began to decline, a decline from which book selling has not fully recovered.

Then came the third phase. When the import of books was liberalised many more books now became available. It so happened, however, that the prices of books began to go up steeply around this time.



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Consequently, it became more and more difficult for readers to buy books. This was also the period when Indian book selling became very active. In the second phase the Americans had undertaken a substantial programme of reprinting of American books in India. Within a decade or so, Rs. 100—200 crores had become available to the publishing industry as capital. This, in turn, promoted indigenous book publishing also. Several new publishers appeared on the scene and a few of them even began to export books. Book selling, however, continued to be in deep trouble. For one thing, direct book selling to libraries still continued, though on a reduced scale, for another thing, the import of 'remainders' also began to get under way.

In the second and the third phase UGC grants had been liberal and, therefore, book buying had been on the upswing. The third phase came to a crashing close towards the end of 70's when grants dried up without notice and Indian publishing in English which was poised for a big breakthrough received a serious jolt. For a couple of years the situation continued to be dismal. It is improving now. Local publishing is still cautious however, though things are picking up once again. It should not be necessary to say anything more about the fourth phase except to call attention to one thing and that is where campus book shops became relevant.

One important weakness of publishing in India always has been its inability to distribute, how to reach the reader has always been a problem. What is more, over the years book selling has received a severe set-back. It has not yet fully recovered from the in-roads made into it by importers, nor has it recovered from the menace of the 'remainders'. All this was accompanied by the librarians being corrupted. Though the librarians would hotly deny it, the fact remains that in addition to the decline in their professional standards, unsavoury practices have also crept in. This is not the occasion to say anything more about it except to note the fact that this is happening.

As if all this was not bad enough, book selling has received several other set-backs. The prices of books are so high now that a much greater outlay is required in order to stock a book shop than ever before. Secondly, the over-heads have become very high and book shops find it more and more difficult to operate on a small margin. That used to be the old pattern. Not only that, book shops prefer to sell books which are rather expensive (costing Rs. 200/- or more) so that their margin is substantial. They are hardly interested in selling paperbacks costing Rs. 30-40. In the case of these books, there is too much work and too little return. In consequence, paperbacks which have revolutionised the academic life in other countries have hardly touched India. The sufferer is no other than students and the entire academic community.

One minor thing that can marginally help to improve the situation is if there were to be more outlets for retail selling. It is in this context that a string of over a hundred book shops at university campuses should be seen. In addition to university campuses such book shops can be opened in about a hundred colleges also. These colleges have an enrolment of several thousands and can easily afford to keep a book shop to it.

Maybe the UGC would like to consider such a proposal.

—EDITOR

## Translations from Tagore

Pratima Bowes, Translator  
Some Songs and Poems from Rabindranath Tagore

pp. 143, *Allied*, 1984, Rs. 60.00

Aruna Chakravarti

Tagore : Songs of Tagore

pp. 216, *Vaitalik*, Bombay

Reviewed by Sujit Mukherjee

Of these two volumes, one consists entirely and the other partly of Rabindra Sangeet lyrics translated into English. This must represent a diversification in the cottage industry started and run entirely by Bengalis whose earlier preoccupation was with translating Rabindranath's poems into English. Rendering Bengali poetry into English is difficult enough; doing the same for Bengali songs bespeaks a devotion that ought to be admired. Whether it should be encouraged or not is another matter.

### NOTEWORTHY

Devotionwise, the second volume being noticed here is more noteworthy. Its printing and paper could easily have earned a hundred-rupee price or more. But the book is not for sale and will be made available, on request, to "educational institutions and Rabindra Sangeet societies all over the country". The book is thus aimed at propagating Rabindra Sangeet without hoping for commercial gain. No individual but a group has financed the project. This is Vaitalik. According to my Beng-Eng dictionary, *vaitalik* means 'one employed to glorify (esp. a prince) in songs (usu. at fixed hours)', a cultural organisation of Bombay whose president Madhuri Shah (Chairman, UGC) has contributed a foreword to the volume. In it she tells us that the highlights of Vaitalik's activities are "tri-weekly programmes of authentic classical Indian dance for the enlightenment of foreign tourists, classical music recitals both Indian and Western, and presentations of songs of Tagore and other poets-composers." Non-Bengali Indians must also be benefitting from these



programmes, but I hope foreign tourists will be charged a reasonable amount for copies of this volume.

One hundred songs (Rabindranath is said to have composed at least two thousand) in English translation have been arranged here in five sections—love songs; devotional songs; songs of the motherland; songs of the seasons; other songs—and each section is demarcated by a tastefully designed flyleaf. Accompanying each translation (and on the facing page) is a Devanagiri transliteration of the original. This is mentioned on the title-page as well as on the cover as '*Taygoar ke geet Aruna Chakravarti dvara Hindi me varnantarit*'. More substantial work than 'varnantar' has been done by Aruna Chakravarti when she rendered the songs into English. We learn from the introduction provided by Krishna Kripalani (biographer of Rabindranath, also translator) that Mrs Chakravarti teaches English in a Delhi college. Her sister Mrs Amita Banerji, who is vice-president of Vaitalik, apparently gave her the idea of such a book. Printed in Delhi and published from Bombay, the volume will no doubt become part of our metropolitan culture. I wonder what other poet-composer is on Vaitalik's programme next for such treatment.

#### EARNEST

Mrs Chakravarti's translations are earnest but unpretentious. Considering that hers was probably a labour of love, we should not demand too much of the translations. They give a general idea of the originals and only occasionally falter on the details. Thus, *tomader* in the first line of the first song is in second person plural and cannot be rendered as 'thy', which through usage has acquired a singular number; *kholabo* in the second line of the second song is not 'shall open' but 'shall get opened'; *mulyer pariman* in the third line of the third song is surely 'measure of value' and not 'immeasurable value'. And so on.

Pratima Bowes has also included songs in her collection (which contains 36 songs and 48 poems)

and justified their inclusion on the ground that "half the value of Tagore music lies in the lyrical quality of Tagore songs considered as poetry". Wouldn't this be precisely the reason why the songs should not have been included in a volume of translations—because not more than half of their value can be represented? And even this half has not been retrieved when the translator offers us 'poetry' of this kind: "The rain falls in profusion/drip-drop all day long/this day of the advanced rainy season" (p. 6), or "My night spends itself out into this *sarad* morning/tell me, flute, in whose hands should I leave you" (p. 15), or "The sun and the moon drink it by the handful" (p. 20). The originals do sound better than this, specially when sung, but the translator has done no service to Rabindranath by offering these as samples of poetry.

#### TO RE-ESTABLISH TAGORE

Anybody who has read and respected Pratima Bowes in a different context—as a philosopher, especially of religion—will wonder why she at all wanted to put together such a book. Quite clearly from the evidence found here, she is not a practised translator of poetry. Though she claims in her introduction that her selection is representative of "the richness

and variety one can find in Tagore of all periods," the actual selection cannot support such a claim. In fact, she knows this because she has pleaded that her choice has been "severely limited by translatability". That is, she has chosen only what she has been able to translate. Yet she asserts: "Anyway, selections like mine are important to re-establish Tagore in his rightful place as a poet of world stature". Not for the first time, Rabindranath has been harmed not by an enemy but by a devotee.

An interesting feature of the selection is that out of the 48 poems translated for this volume, 37 belong to the latter years (1925 to 1941) of Rabindranath's output. This is interesting because it is the earlier Rabindranath that is generally known in English translation. Unfortunately, the translator is not quite equal to the task of displaying this side of Rabindranath's poetry. In any case, it was somewhat presumptuous of her to have thought that 'some' poems and songs could ever represent this prolific poet's total achievement. As for her desire to 're-establish Tagore', many good Bengalis suffer from this delusion—intermittently but not many have the energy to act on it.

*Sujit Mukherjee is publisher of Orient-Longman & is currently based in Hyderabad.*

## A Labour of Love

Sasi Bhusan Das

Wilfred Owen's Influence on Three Generations of Poets  
pp. 282, Roy and Roy, Calcutta, 1982, Rs. 70.00

Reviewed by M.G. Ramanan

S. B. Das seems dedicated to Owen. He is a prolific writer and this book is the third in a trilogy of books on Owen, the first two in the series being *Wilfred Owen's 'Strange Meeting'—A Critical Study* and *Aspects of Wilfred Owen's Poetry*. This is an impressive record and one is justified in turning to this book on Owen's influence with great

expectations. Unfortunately these expectations are belied for this rather long book of nearly 300 pages has a very thin argument.

The book is repetitive, tantalizing (because of the promises made but not kept) and irritating (because it is obvious that Das is not adequate to the task).



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No doubt 'influence' is no easy thing to talk about. It is often subtle and indirect but this is all the more reason for taking the subject seriously and not vulgarizing it. What is one to do when Das passes off the following as introduction to the section where he deals with Owen's influence on Herbert Read?—"Sir Herbert was born in 1893, i. e., the year in which Wilfred Owen was born. Like Owen, Herbert Read was born in an obscure family, and was the son of a farmer in Yorkshire. Like Owen again, Herbert Read fought in the first World War for three years as an infantry officer and won the Military Cross in 1917 and the D.S.O. in 1918. Shortly before his death Owen also had won the Military Cross in 1918. But Herbert Read, who had a much longer lease of life, was knighted in 1953".

## LACK OF SERIOUSNESS

This in my opinion betrays a sad lack of seriousness. The tone is all wrong and the level of discourse totally inadequate. Is the cause of comparativist criticism promoted by the knowledge that Wilfred Owen never became Sir Wilfred? If Das had done a close study not only of the poetry of Owen and the poets of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, but also of the secondary material available, and if those journals, diaries, letters, essays and conversations had revealed the relationship with Owen these other poets had, Das's book would have been a sound contribution to an important area of knowledge.

As it stands Das has placed all his trust and most of his emphasis on the corpus of poetry produced by the poets he is interested in. In the process he has shown up glaringly the kind of difficulties, someone, who has no access to original manuscripts and materials, falls into. Das makes too much of the common motifs, images and themes in the poetry of Owen and his shadows and does not provide for the very real possibility that something like the 'spirit of the age' had a lot to do with the matter. We do speak of a Romantic world-view or an Augustan or Modernist ethos but we do not go about saying that one poet was the progenitor of all the others.

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Certainly Owen was a major war-poet but Das's book does not convince me that Owen alone was behind all the other poets he talks about.

## LAYING IT THICK

This book has 282 pages of which the first 200 deal with Owen's immediate contemporaries—T. S. Eliot, Herbert Read and Ezra Pound. Eliot gets the major portion of this section with Read getting a miserly 14 pages to Eliot's 181. Pound is brought in to no real purpose save to be quoted from 'Mauderley' and to be dismissed as having no connections with Owen. After this section on the contemporaries we have 26 pages (mostly a string of quotations from the poets and from authorities: Welland, Fraser, Scarfe, Gertrude White and Daiches) on the MacSpaunday group—with the unaccountable exception of MacNeice—and a bit on Dylan Thomas. After that 21 pages tell us the story of Owen's

influence on the poets of the Second World War—Keyes, Douglas and Alun Lewis. Das is not satisfied with this for he throws in a few 'minor' Second War poets (as though the other poets of the Second War were not minor enough!) and for good measure adds sections on the treatment of nature in Owen and Second War poets and one on what he calls the specific contributions of World War II poets. A two pages conclusion almost brings the book to an end but not before we have been treated to a select Bibliography which is pretty large indeed for it has these sections—a) books by poets mentioned in Das's text, except Owen, b) anthologies in chronological order of publication from 1941 to 1964 and c) some critical studies both general and on individual poets, books for further reading and books for background reading. The 'select' bibliography is followed by 'a chronological list of critical works on Owen'. The books date from 1920 on to 1982 and here Das immodestly mentions his book

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*The Influence of Wilfred Owen on Three Generations of Poets !* This is indeed laying it on thick.

## INFLUENCE ON ELIOT

Das claims that his discussion of the relation between Eliot and Owen will "create some stir in the world of literary criticism". According to him Eliot nowhere acknowledges Owen's influence but that influence is nevertheless subtle, complex, subterranean and escapes notice if Eliot is superficially read. Das, of course, never reads Eliot but closely and he asserts that *The Waste Land* gains significance if it is read as a poem with the Great War behind it and as a poem in the shadow of Owen's poetry. Thus, the 'Unreal City' passage is found to be close to Owen's 'The Show' and the Stetson passage to Owen's 'Strange Meeting'.

Das is so keen on showing Eliot in relation to Owen that he can actually downgrade Eliot's known debt to Dante and Baudelaire—"One cannot really understand what Stetson and Mylae (a battle in the Punic War) have got to do with Eliot's allusions to Dante's *Inferno*. The ghost episode in Dante's *Inferno* to which Eliot alludes in his Notes has nothing to do with Mylae or any war whatever. The allusion to Dante is simply a symbolical cloak to conceal the immediate source of inspiration of the passage viz., Owen's "Strange Meeting". Or again, "The Unreal City is Eliot's *inferno* corresponding to Baudelaire's unreal city and Dante's *Inferno* by his allusions to Baudelaire and Dante Eliot wants us to understand his passage in that light."

*The Family Reunion* and Owen's poem 'The Fates' have common phrases and expressions. The play also has connections with other poems of Owen like 'Happiness', 'Winter Song', 'The Unreturning' and 'A Terre.' Of the character Owen in Eliot's play this is what Das says: "The frequency of mention of Owen may have a symbolical significance. Owen attending, from behind the screen, Harry's younger brother, John, who is to succeed him as the Lord

Monchensey, may suggest, symbolically, the war poet's subtle and invisible influence on Eliot..." Das's critical conclusions often end on such a note of banality.

## DIET OF CONJECTURE

To substantiate his laboured analyses of Owen's influence on Eliot (there are sections on 'Strange Meeting' and 'Little Gidding', Owen's influence on the other Quartets of Eliot, the Fire Symbol in Owen and Eliot etc.) Das can offer up only conjectures that Eliot must have heard of Owen, who was recognised by leading poets of the day as a major poet, that Eliot most likely came across Owen's poems in the Journals Eliot was reading because Eliot "was in touch with so many journals", that Eliot who knew about Edith Sitwell's *Wheels* which published Owen must have been prompted to read Owen and that "as a regular contributor... Eliot must have come across"... and so on. We cannot be sure that Eliot ever read Owen though he may have been aware of him. But criticism must be sure and it is ill-served by a diet of conjecture.

Eliot, says Das, borrowed in three ways: "Firstly, those the sources of which he was fully conscious when he incorporated them in his work: secondly, those which were based on his faint recollections of their sources, and finally, those which years ago formed part of his reading material and were forgotten, but remained buried all the same in the depths of his subconscious mind, were called forth, in an opportune moment, by the similarity of a theme or a situation." The "echoes", Das traces of Eliot's Owen connection are the result of his plumbing the depths of Eliot's unconscious.

From Eliot Das turns his attention to Herbert Read who according to him shared Owen's attitude to war. In *A Coat of Many Colours* (1945), Read had quoted Owen's famous remark about the job of the poet during war: "All a poet can do today is warn. That is why the true Poets must be truthful." In 'Kneeshaw' Read takes off where

Owen in a poem like 'Disabled' leaves off. Das puts it thus: "It is this 'Pity of war' which is central in Owen's poetry, that makes Owen's poem move a reader in a manner in which Read's poem cannot, because of its emphasis on the horror of the war." This is a good point though inelegantly phrased and Das is right in observing that both Read and Owen share a love of Nature and the notion of the fellowship of soldiers in time of war. Owen's 'Greater Love' and Read's 'My Company' are cited in this context.

## USE OF HALF-RHYME

A close analysis of Read's 'The Nuncio' demonstrates that poet's use of the half-rhyme or pararhyme, which for Das is Owen's single great technical contribution to modern poetry. (In fact Das in the remainder of his book talks of very little else but the response of the poets of the 30s and 40s to Owen's half-rhymes.) Read's poem is Owenesque in manner and we cannot help agreeing with Das that Read assimilated Owen's influence because he shared with Owen not merely the experience of war but also his attitude to it. However, Read is inferior to Owen in technical skill because the half-rhyme is entirely adequate to Owen's vision and is peculiar to him while Read and others could not use the innovation effectively.

The poets of the 1930s also failed with half-rhymes. These poets were attracted by Owen's bold technical experiments and had little use for his attitude to war. They were operating in a different context and thus their use of Owen's technical innovation tended to be mechanical. Auden's 'The Three Companions' for example is written under the shadow of Owen but his theme here and in other poems is unsuitable for the employment of half rhymes. Indeed, while Owen's use of the half-rhymes is progressive and sparing, Auden seems to overuse it. Day-Lewis who claimed Owen as his poetic ancestor nevertheless, says Das, is different in his strong communistic faith. If human suffering was the



motivating impulse of Owen's poetry that of Day-Lewis's was a strong political partisanship. Nevertheless Day-Lewis was influenced by Owen's technique though he too used the half-rhymes mechanically.

Stephen Spender was 'the Wilfred Owen of the Peace' as Scarfe called him. Owen's influence on Spender was profound and subtly interwoven into the texture of his poetry. A good example is Spender's poem 'Ultima Ratio Regum.' Spender was concerned in his poetry with the causes for war and he tended to identify capitalist economy as a prime cause. Owen was least concerned with causes. He was concerned with the *effect* war had on people. Both Owen and Spender loved nature and both shared a satirical strength; pathos and indignation are common elements in their poetry. With a discussion of Dylan Thomas's use of half-rhymes this section on the 30s ends. It is easily the best part of Das's book.

## SECOND WORLD WAR POETS

In the final section Das takes up for consideration poets like Sidney Keyes, Keith Douglas and Alun Lewis who were Second World War poets. The principal difference between these poets and those of the first World War, particularly Owen, is that the later poets entered war without any romantic illusions. They could take Owen and his friends as read. If Owen's key word was 'pity', Keyes' word was 'pain'. Pain, fear, death are the main preoccupations of Keyes' poem 'The Foreign Gate'. Douglas wrote poems with Owen's 'Futility' in mind. Alun Lewis's preoccupation with death, his epigrammatic style, terseness and clarity make him thoroughly Owenesque. However, his tendency towards self-pity and sentimentality separates him from the tough Owen.

Das devotes some pages to other Second War poets like Donald Bain, Michael Greening, Richard George, Patricia Ledward, Norman Nicolson,

Henry Reed (the poet of 'Naming of Parts'). Francis Mayo and so on. By now we are tired but not the indefatigable Das who has one section on 'The Role of Nature in the Poetry of Wilfred Owen and the Poets of the Second World War' and another on 'Specific contribution to war poetry made by the poets of the Second World War'. His conclusion is merely a summing up and does not add anything to the book.

It is apparent that Das is an avid reader of poetry and to his credit it must be stated that his book contains several close analyses of poems. He does succeed in drawing attention to resemblances between Owen and other poets but if he had stopped with that instead of seeking to assert the presence of Owenesque 'influence' in these poets his book would have been more satisfying.

*M. G. Ramanan lectures in English at the University of Hyderabad.*

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# Public Sector in India

R.N. Chopra

Public Sector in India

pp. xvi+218, *Intellectual Publishing House*, New Delhi, 1983, Rs. 100.00

Reviewed by S.Y. Govindarajan

The public sector has come to stay and by now the investment in that sector is about Rs. 70,000 crores, i.e. 60% of the total investment (the private sector investment is 40% i.e. about Rs. 50,000 crores).

This book deals with the performance, profitability and industrial relations in public sector undertakings (P.S.U.s) in India. The author who served as a member of I.A.S. for thirty years and is a retired Chairman of F.C.I. (Food Corporation of India Ltd). He held this post from 1973 to 1977. The book deals mainly with industrial relations and its effect on the performance and profitability of P.S.U.s.

The author ascribes (quite rightly) the poor performance of public sector undertakings to underutilisation of capacity created. He also says that another reason is the loss of production due to work stoppages by strikes, go-slow tactics, etc. According to his estimate, there is a production loss of at least Rs. 500 crores per year due to the stoppage of work on one count or other. While this is true, it should be evident to the reader that underutilisation of capacity is the main reason and strikes, etc., caused by poor-labour-management understanding and relations is also one of the causes for under-utilisation of capacity—indeed a major one. But, there are other causes also. Some of the undertakings, as the author himself says in one place (page-85), started with huge initial capacities which could not be utilised fully as the orders of high magnitude never came even in spite of near monopoly position in the market.

## RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT

After making some random case studies based on the data given in the Bureau of Public Enterprises

Annual Reports, the author comes to the conclusion that under-utilisation of capacity, low productivity, caused by labour over-staffing, top heavy management, inability to introduce improvement for fear of disturbing industrial relations, labour indiscipline, lack of accountability, etc., are the reasons for the poor performance of the public sector undertakings. All these are very well-known and brought out in the studies, books and articles written by various persons. They have also been brought out in the studies and reports of the Committee on Public Undertakings.

While, discussing the basic weaknesses of the public sector, it is complained that the autonomy of the public sector undertakings is reduced to a myth since all the decisions of importance and magnitude are taken by the ministry under which the PSU is, while the managements of PSUs are responsible for actual performance and answerable for the poor results. This is again a point which has been highlighted in various forums. No one would deny that PSUs should have autonomy. At the same time it is true that when the management is strong and right the ministry rarely imposes its will and where it does it cannot accuse the PSU concerned for the consequences that follow. Even the author says in the introduction that he found that the labour situation called for drastic action in F.C.I. As soon as he took over as Chairman, he was able to convince the Minister and get powers to take drastic action. He did succeed in breaking the backbone of the illegal and violent agitation.

Of course, the management has to take the blessing and support of the ministry in such major decisions. Unfortunately, accountability to the ministry and through it to Parliament does handicap to an extent any Government body inclu-

ding companies. For example in the private sector no one worries who gets the contract for the supply of raw material and how so long as it is of good quality and at reasonable price. In the public sector procedures should be followed in letter and spirit. Justice should not only be done, but appear to be done also! However, if we ask the bureaucrats in the ministry, they would say that the managers of the PSUs take shelter under the excuse of "no autonomy" to cover up their inefficiencies.

## OTHER ISSUES

The author has been a Government servant for more than two decades and the chairman of the FCI for four years. While no one will oppose his suggestion that the PSUs should develop their own cadres, his wholesale condemnation of Government servants as being unfit to shoulder business is an unfortunate generalisation. It appears odd especially after his statement in the introduction that after his stiff action against the workers of F.C.I. in the first year, he had four trouble-free years as Chairman/FCI. There are Government servants and Government servants. Quite a few of them have done very well in public sector and some have gone from there to private sector and are doing very well even now.

The author also states that there are too many agencies that control/question the PSUs and there is too much publicity. There is also duplication of audit and the professional auditors and the C.A.G.'s officials are vying with each other to pick holes. This takes up too much time of the senior managers. Publicity is unavoidable when there is public ownership. As regards audit, audit by professional auditors and that of the C.A.G are complementary and do not have to compete with each other. Of course, there should be no unnecessary interference in day-to-day administration/running of a PSU. We have to develop healthy practices there.

Industrial relations in public sector is certainly a sore that has effected the efficient working of many-a-PSU. Certainly, the elabo-



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rate treatment of the subject by the author is justified. It is educative. The layman, particularly, will find it interesting and useful. The author has also compared the system of settling industrial disputes in India with that in some other countries.

#### ALTERNATIVES

Having identified poor industrial relations as an important cause for the poor performance of PSUs, the author suggests two alternatives for tackling the problem. Both of them have one thing in common. The PSUs should have a separate set of provisions for tackling industrial disputes. In each case, the public utility undertakings and the essential service undertakings should be defined comprehensively and carefully. Strikes in them should be banned. The first proposal is to have a National Commission on Industrial Relations for the public sector undertakings. This would have the final say in the settlement

of disputes. How it is to be constituted and other details are given. The second proposal is the enactment of a separate law for industrial disputes in PSUs and setting up of local consultative council or a consultative council to which disputes will be referred. But, vital and intractable disputes should be referred to a National Commission.

As the author himself states, the chances of any trade union, whether in public sector or private sector, agreeing to a ban on strike are remote if not nil. The recent port workers strike, though banned, did go on for over a month.

There is nothing in particular to commend about this book nor is there anything in it to condemn. What it purports to convey has been said by many other books—reviews on public sectors.

*S.Y. Govindarajan is a member of the I.A. A.S. and is currently posted in Hyderabad.*

## Social Theory and Ideology

Yogendra Singh

Image of Man : Ideology and Theory in Indian Sociology  
pp. vi+194, Chankya Publications, 1984, Rs. 80.00

Reviewed by D.N. Dhanagare

The book under review is an important attempt to probe the distinctive, if any, cognitive and epistemic structure of Indian sociology. Yogendra Singh has undertaken this analytical exercise within a dual framework drawn from the history of ideas and from the sociology of knowledge. This itself gives this book its distinguishing feature in contrast to several other recent writings on sociology and social anthropology in India, with perhaps only one exception of Ramakrishna Mukherjee's *Sociology of Indian Sociology*. The essays included in this book were published earlier as articles for different seminars and symposia or were commissioned as articles for certain agencies or perio-

dicals. Still they display a rare thematic unity that makes this volume a "must" for every serious student of sociology.

#### CRITICAL TENSIONS

Broadly the longish essay on 'the concept of man in sociology' takes

care of the first part of the title of this book. This plus the first chapter—Introduction—spell out the present critical tensions in the cognitive structure, methodology and theory in sociology as a whole. The classical tradition of social thought has handed down to contemporary sociology two diametrically opposite theoretical paradigms—one favouring "integration" and the other "replacement". These came to be associated with Durkheim, Weber and Karl Marx respectively. However, argues Yogendra Singh, Sociology in the West could sustain the critical tensions and could gain wider acceptability mainly because it offered a middle path between positivism of the natural sciences and phenomenology of philosophy and theology. Sociology also offers an independent world-view which is located not in the transcendent, but in the existential structure of man and society. It is on this premise that practically all the traditions of theorising in sociology seem to be converging today. This is what has been termed by Y. Singh as "paradigmatic convolution" witnessed from the sixties onwards.

One of the important sources of critical tension in sociology is the interface between ideology and sociological theory. The ideological element in every theory, including that of "alienation", lies in the process of mystification which is one of the important functions of ideology. The author takes the view that an essential purpose of the social sciences is to expose the ideological foundations of the premises and presuppositions of any theory (p. 7). In this context Y. Singh has also succinctly brought out the notion of ideology as developed in the contributions of Marx.

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Weber, Durkheim and Karl Mannheim.

#### IDEOLOGICAL MOORINGS

Later, turning to Indian sociology, the author points out, and very rightly so, that the writings of scholar-administrators who laid the foundations of modern sociology and social anthropology in India were not free from ideological moorings. The pioneers of Indian sociology like B.N. Seal, G.S. Ghurye, Radha Kamal Mukherjee and D.P. Mukerji tended to reject all forms of theoretic superimpositions from the West on Indian reality precisely because they suspected ideological overtones of all such importations. But here was the real dilemma of indigenisation of Indian sociology, because the normative structure of Indian sociological theory was not grounded in the Indian traditional world-view.

The main issue in the indigenisation of Indian sociology is that of integrating the conceptual and methodological structures with the Indian world-view, its fundamental values of human morals and existential conditions. How can this be attained without anchoring sociological training sufficiently in Indian philosophy, epistemology, Indology and history? This question has however been bypassed at least in the first essay although towards the closing part of the book Y. Singh has decried the steadily widening gulf between sociology and history (p. 162) as the consequence of methodological individualism that had developed almost into an obsession in all behavioural sciences. He therefore favours greater use of history as a resource for understanding Indian society. But then Y. Singh has cautioned us that while trying sociological interpretation via history we must not allow sociology to degenerate into narrative history. The warning (pp. 170-71) is timely. An important message has thus been conveyed by this book.

The development of entire social thought from lore to science, from theology to social philosophy in general and modern social science theoretic traditions in particular,

have revolved around the most fundamental notions of man and society. Different disciplines have addressed themselves to the basic problem of conceptualising the nature of relationship between man and society. In the second major essay in this book Singh has portrayed the voyage of sociology from Comte to the present day theoretical orientations sketching how they viewed man as species being—whether endowed with any natural gifts or whether captivated by his existential predicament. These views ranged from positivistic-realism of Comte, Spencer to nominalism and neo-nominalism of Homans.

#### ENTIRE PANORAMA

This entire panorama of divergent concepts of man in the classical as well as in the contemporary sociological theories has been deftly covered by the author in the theme essay of this book. Here, the author has elaborated the views of Comte, Spencer, Pareto, Marx, Durkheim, Merton, Daniel Bell and several others. The subtle differences between Marx, and Freud on the one hand and Freud and Eric Fromm who has combined the two in his concept of man have been competently handled. Broadly speaking the concepts of man in the positivistic, functional, dialectical and interpretative schools as well as those of the schools of critical theory i.e. Frankfurt School, phenomenology and symbolic interactionism have been discussed in sufficient detail. Scrupulous readers would find Y. Singh's attempt to show the similarities between Marx and Durkheim on the mystification function of "ideology" and of "collective—consciousness" in their concepts of man as particularly enlightening (pp. 32-39).

While discussing Weber's concept of man, Y. Singh says "for him man is a 'rational being', 'affective being' and 'charismatic being'" (pp. 58-9). About the first two there can hardly be any dispute. However, regarding the third one, Weber's views are open to diverse interpretations. *Charisma* is almost supra-human and even

super-human element which paradoxically is found in few, in fact rare, individuals who are perceived by others thus. If that is so, how far Weber thought this element to be residing in every man is open to doubt and is somewhat polemical interpretation as it tends to defy the very definition of charisma.

What was quite revealing to this reviewer is Y. Singh's treatment of Herbert Marcuse's notion of "realm of freedom" which according to Singh comes practically close to the state of "*nirvana*" in the Hindu philosophy of life and concept of man's true liberation. Because both Marcuse and the *nirvana* theory view this realm of necessity as the realm of "unfreedom" (pp. 64-5). Surprisingly very rarely was this proximity of Marcuse's concept of human freedom and the Vedantic view of life was so clearly revealed as Singh has. I wish he had delved in this point at greater length.

#### OMISSION

A striking omission in this otherwise brilliant essay is that of Georg Simmel and the entire school of formal sociology. Particularly Simmel's famous essay on "How is society possible?" deserved at least a brief mention in this review on the concept of man when even R.K. Merton has been discussed by Y. Singh admitting that his contribution is not all that outstanding (pp. 43-44). Whereas Erving Goffman's approach has been lauded as "very original" (pp. 71-72). Y. Singh did not consider it necessary to devote more than ten lines to him. Also, entire ethnomethodology has not been done full justice to in this essay.

As regards the role of sociology in understanding man Peter Berger's views have been contrasted with those of C. Wright Mills. The former has caricatured the role of sociology in the interpretation of human condition and has described sociology "as a debunking discipline". Y. Singh on the contrary, endorses the views of C. Wright Mills that "sociological concept of man does offer an alternative world-view and a substitute normative structure (pp. 72-73). While



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we share the latter view-point on the constructive role sociology plays in enriching our understanding of man and his existential conditions, we do not quite disown Berger's position, though half-truth, about the character of sociology.

Reading the entire chapter on the concept of Man one feels that the exposition, though insightful and illuminating, is somewhat incomplete. Since the book is a treatise on the epistemology and history of Indian sociology, the same exercise on the concept of man could have been further extended to cover at least some major contributions to this concept from among Indian social thinkers in general and Indian sociologists in particular. Discourses by Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Maharshi Aurobindo, Raman, Dayanand down to Mahatma Gandhi in the realm of general social thought, and writings of Radha Kamal Mukherjee, D.P. Mukerji, N.K. Bose and even A.K. Saran from among Indian sociologists could have been critically examined in this essay.

## LIMITED RANGE

At least some of them have been discussed in Chapter 3 on "Ideology, Theory and Method"; but then the focus no longer remains on the concept of man, but shifts to the major theoretical, ideological and methodological paradigms or orientations that have influenced Indian sociology. Moreover, the period covered is admittedly from 1952 to 1977. Few will disagree that this leaves out a substantial phase of Indian sociology. Yogendra Singh's review then covers broadly the theoretic directions in Indian sociological writings and attempts to show the extent to which they have received an imprint of the western sociological traditions and also the degree to which Indian sociology was able to traverse an independent and an indigenous path.

Here, the philosophic-theoretical orientation in the works of Radha Kamal Mukherjee, D.P. Mukerji and A.K. Saran, the author argues, have shown the potential to offer a substitute cognitive as well as nor-

mative structure for Indian sociology. Although D.P. preferred more historical-dialectical mode of sociological analysis, his quest was all along for a new synthesis-between Marx and Dilthey, also Weber, between tradition and modernity in the understanding of the structural tensions in the Indian society (pp. 83-85). Saran not only rejected universalisation of sociological categories but also of sociology (p. 86). Next, Yogendra Singh has also examined the impact of cultural and structural theoretic orientations in addition to dialectical-historical orientation in Indian sociology.

Here Y. Singh has mentioned M.N. Srinivas's concept of "sanskritisation" as a significant contribution to village studies in India. While we do not dispute this claim, Y. Singh, it must be said, fails to note for posterity that disciples as well as admirers of Srinivas sometimes overdid and overstated the case by inflating its limited theoretic component out of all proportions. They did not realise its limited contribution to theory of change, let alone to metatheory. No wonder therefore that by the mid-1970s the father of this concept had confessed that he was fed up with "sanskritisation" (in an interview published in the *Times of India* New Delhi).

Surprisingly neither under "cultural-logical-nor" under "structural" theoretic orientation do we find any mention of G.S. Ghurye, Irawati Karve and K. M. Kapadia. The "Bombay school" is more or less completely omitted in Y. Singh's important review. There are just a few oblique references to Ghurye's rejection of the tribe-caste dichotomy as an ideologically loaded formulation (pp. 15-16 and 157), and Ghurye as a pioneer sociologist (on p. 113). Otherwise there is no attempt to discern major influences on Ghurye and his broad sociological orientation. Even Ashwini Seth and A. Tankha's article from *EPW* on "differentiation of peasantry in U.P." has received much greater attention than Ghurye has (p. 86).

## BOMBAY SCHOOL

I am sure Y. Singh will agree

with us that, despite his theoretical eclecticism Ghurye remains an enigma in Indian sociology even today. Perhaps in the years ahead professional sociologists will recognise Ghurye's enormous contribution without being able to say quite why. What made him unique was his indefatigable energy and his ability to make most of everything—whether Gotra and Charana, Indo-Aryan kinship or caste-tensions in modern India. Because he was chronically excited about every subject matter of sociology, he was exciting and above all the excitement in him was intellectually contagious. That explains why Bombay under Ghurye produced a wide spectrum of important sociological studies.

Yogendra Singh is very right in criticising the Eurocentricity of most of the Western social science paradigms and in saying that "every social scientist is a product of historicity, and so the notion of relevance also becomes a problem in the sociology of knowledge" (p. 131). One wonders whether a near total black-out of the Bombay school of Indian sociology is in any way the result of a similar "Lucknow-centricity" which might have unconsciously conditioned the author's vision while reviewing Indian sociology, and hence found Ghurye, Karve and Kapadia and even M.S. Gore as well as I.P. Desai not too relevant to be taken serious note of.

In the essay on "Functional metaphor" the author argues that the tendency among Indian sociologists in general has been in favour of the metaphoric use of theories, implying their application by simplistic analogies. This, according to him, is as much true of dialectical approach as it is of the functionalist one—whether in the study of caste, village, family, tribe or religion. In this context, Y. Singh has also cautioned that "with the coming into fashion of agrarian sociology and sociology of social movements, the functional metaphor in sociological practice has not withered away. On the contrary one could establish its persistence in many such studies" (pp. 124-25). But he has not cited any concrete examples of metaphoric uses in some recent studies either in agra-



rian sociology or in social movements sociology. What precisely inhibited the author's candid expression here is rather incomprehensible.

# DIRECTION ?

In the last three essays of this book Yogendra Singh projects his expectations about the role of social sciences in India. He wants them "to perform the task of a true science namely offer explanations of social phenomena in terms of prediction of causal relationships". He thus clearly casts his vote in favour of the positivistic paradigm (p. 160), and yet he admits that "whatever may be the sophistication achieved in scientific endeavour by social scientist, its problem selection, formulation of hypothesis and so on is basically conditioned by the value-preferences of the researcher". It is not, therefore, very clear as to how Y. Singh would reconcile this contradiction between the awareness of limitations of social sciences and the kind of positivistic direction in which he wants them to move. And then Y. Singh has also endorsed social scientists taking normative positions and considers value commitment essential (p. 172). Whereas this

observation would be welcomed by many a young sociologist in India, the author ought to have said how this position of his fits into the canons of positivistic philosophy of science for which his choice is unequivocal.

The last three essays on Indian sociology are overlapping and at places even repetitive. Notwithstanding our criticism of certain issues discussed in this book, in all fairness it must be said that this book is the first ever attempt to search systematically for the cognitive and epistemic structure of Indian sociology. Though written in a language that is both terse and jargon-ridden, the book has discussed several substantive issues in sociological theory and ideology as they have reflected in Indian sociology since its inception. Being a significant contribution to history of ideas as well as to the sociology of knowledge this book must be read and reread by all serious students of sociology.

*D.N. Dhanagare is Professor of Sociology at the University of Poona. Currently he is Visiting Research Professor at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo.*

with the centenary celebrations of the Congress. A lot of new and unpublished material is available in the former, while the latter is just a useful reference work of matter that had been published already elsewhere.

# INTERIM GOVERNMENT

The significance of choosing September 1946 as the starting point for a new series lies in the fact that for the first time in his career Nehru held government office, when on 2 September he formed the Interim Government at the invitation of Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India. The Interim Government was expected to provide, within the broad framework of the Government of India Act (1935), a transitional administration under Indian political leaders, pending the drafting of a constitution by an Indian Constituent Assembly, to which the British government was to transfer power. All this was in accordance with the British Cabinet Mission plan of 16 May 1946.

Other Congress leaders had held office during 1937-39 and again in 1946 as members of provincial governments, and were probably somewhat more able than Nehru was to effect a compromise between the long term aim of dislodging the British Raj and the short-term preoccupations of running an administration created by the colonial masters. For Nehru it was a difficult new role. As he said to the delegates assembled for the Congress session at Meerut on 21 November 1946, "During the last few weeks there were many occasions when I was on the point of resigning. I do not know what may happen within a week, ten days or a month. But one thing is clear that the freedom with which I used to place my views before the country is longer there...Every time I feel difficulty in frankly expressing my views." (p 16)

The difficulties faced or felt by Nehru arose from the fact that two other quite different perspectives on the political situation in India were being presented by the British government and the Muslim League; the interpretation of the Cabinet Mission declaration both on the

# Office Without Power, Office With Power

Jawaharlal Nehru

Selected Works, Second series, Vol. I

pp. 653 + plates, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund & Oxford University Press, 1984, Rs. 150.00

Jawaharlal Nehru

India's independence and social revolution

pp. 162, Vikas, 1984, Rs. 45.00

Reviewed by Partha Sarathi Gupta

The first of the two books is a compilation of Pandit Nehru's speeches and writings from the beginning of September 1946 till the end of January 1947, the second a selection of his presidential addresses to the Congress both before and

after independence, the last one chosen being dated January 1955. The former is part of a series being published by the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial fund, the latter has been brought out by the All India Congress Committee in connexion



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long-term and the short-term aspects became a bone of contention between the Congress, Muslim League, and the British. As we now know from the documents published by the British Government, from the diary kept by Lord Wavell, and from the recent work of Robin Moore, the British government wanted to transfer power to a confederal structure united only in matters of foreign affairs, defence and communications, whose central government was bound to be a coalition of Muslim Leaguers and Congressmen, and therefore amenable to British influence in matters of foreign policy and defence.

## SUSPICIOUS

Lord Wavell and the other British bureaucrats in India, while agreeing with the overall plan, were more trustful of the Muslim League as collaborators, and somewhat suspicious of the Congress. This suspicion bordered on open hostility in the Northwest Frontier province, even though the electorate had returned the Congress to power. It was only due to the pressure of Attlee, Cripps, and Pethick-Lawrence that Wavell was persuaded to ask the Congress to form the interim government without the participation of the Muslim league.

Nehru was not fully aware of these aims of the Raj, but suspected them, and his visit to the North-west Frontier (which is covered by 32 documents in pp 301-50 in this volume) was an eye-opener to him. In a hitherto unpublished letter of Nehru to Sir Olaf Caroe, the Governor of the N.W.F.P., he wrote, "Many months ago, long before the Interim Government was formed, when it was privately suggested that I should become member for External Affairs, which included tribal areas, I was told that this would be unwelcome to the tribal people. Hardly anybody even in the innermost circles of Government knew about this proposal, and it was obvious that the tribal people could not possibly have heard of it....Much later I heard of some meetings or jirgas of the tribal people who had expressed their disapproval also. At that time too no public announcement of my

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appointment had been made. It was curious that the tribal people should agitate themselves about a fact which was not publicly known and indeed which had not been finally decided upon. The inference was obvious that a broad hint had been given to them and they reacted to it." (p 340)

If a section (perhaps the larger section) of the fast diminishing band of British bureaucrats had a different outlook on the problems of the transfer of power, the Muslim League as well as Hindu communalists did not share the aims of Nehru for a secular republican India. When the Muslim League joined the interim government on 26 October 1946 without giving explicit commitments that they accepted the Cabinet Mission plan more or less along the lines that the Congress had accepted it, and that they would agree to the interim government operate as a team and make little use of the Viceroy's powers.

## INEFFECTIVE

Nehru found, as the days rolled by, that the central government was becoming an ineffective instrument for controlling the communal riots that were sweeping over the country, from Calcutta to Noakhali, and from Noakhali to Bihar. The Congress had taken office at the centre under the shadow of the great Calcutta killings of 16 August, but it found that under the Government of India Act (1935) law and order was a provincial subject, and Governor-general, only in his personal capacity, could exercise the right of supervision, direction and control (p 52). It was probably this which made him not pay a visit to riot-torn Noakhali in the autumn of 1946, and invite a lot of criticism from Hindus in Bengal. He was heckled on this point in Bihar on 6 November 1946 (p 69), and by Bengali Congressmen at the Meerut session of the party in late November. To them he said, "I do not think any useful purpose would have been served by my visiting Noakhali in view of the attitude of the Bengal Ministry. Even if I had gone there, I would not have been able to do anything

for the well-being of the East Bengal sufferers. As against this the Bihar Ministry gave me full help in my work" (p 26).

Indeed, one of the merits of this volume is the rich collection of public speeches and private memoranda that Nehru made or wrote on the communal situation in Bihar and the steps required to curb it. To take but one example from a speech: 'I wonder if people of Patna have gone mad. I have been told that what is happening in Bihar is only a retaliation for East Bengal. But this spirit of revenge is not proper. It is highly condemnable. "All of you are shouting *Jai Hind* and 'Long live the Revolution.' But what sort of country do you want to build up? What kind of revolution are you trying to herald by all these communal disturbances that are prevailing in Bihar?" (p. 55).

He had to appeal to the military authorities to help quell the disturbances, and defended their action in spite of criticisms from Mahatma Gandhi. To Padmaja Naidu he wrote, "This evening I returned by air from Bhagalpur. On arrival I learnt that the military had fired on a peasant mob in the rural areas some miles from here, and about 400 had been killed. Normally such a thing would have horrified me. But would you believe it? I was greatly relieved to hear it!" (p 65). To Vallabhbhai Patel (Home member) he wrote about the Bihar situation, "What the Muslim League people told us was wrong and exaggerated here and there, but the real picture that I now find is quite as bad, and something even worse than anything that they had suggested" (p 63).

While being trenchant in his criticism of Hindu communalism and praising the pacifying role played by his Muslim League colleague Abdur Rab Nishtar during the tour of Bihar (pp 62-63), Nehru was critical of the role of the Muslim League in inciting riots in Bengal, and said so at the ministerial conference in London on 4 December (p 126).

## GROUPING OF PROVINCES

This conference had been called



to see if a common point of view could not be worked out between the Congress, the Muslim League, and the British, on the vexed question of the grouping of provinces, and the procedure of constitution making within each group before the framing of the provincial constitution. All the significant documents connected with this question in this volume have already been printed in the British documents edited by Professor Mansergh and Sir Penderel Moon, and to that extent they do not break fresh ground.

But there is one useful source, given from a manuscript in the Nehru papers, which gives the original draft written by Nehru for the Congress Working Committee meeting which met on 22 Dec. 1946 to discuss the British government's ruling on this question (given on 6 December). By printing this as a text parallel to the working committee resolution, the editors have highlighted the contribution made by Nehru on some fundamental points (pp 28-37). As is well known, the 'grouping' of provinces as understood by the British Raj and the Muslim League was a device to establish the ascendancy of the Muslim League in north-east and north-west India, without breaking up that much of the unity of the subcontinent as was necessary for imperial defence strategy.

It was a compromise between British needs and the desire of the League to have a sovereign state. That in the process the Muslims of the N.W.F.P., the Sikhs of the Punjab, and the Assamese people (not to speak of Bengali Hindus) would have their interests ignored did not matter to the British. It did matter to the Congress. So Nehru wrote, "The Congress made it clear later that their objection was not to provinces entering sections but to compulsory grouping and the possibility of a dominating province framing a constitution for another province entirely against the wishes of the latter. This might result in the framing of rules, franchise, constituencies etc. for elections and otherwise which might seriously prejudice or even nullify

the provision for a province subsequently to opt out of a group. ...The Working Committee are still of opinion that the interpretation put by the British Government in regard to the method of voting in the sections is not in conformity with provincial autonomy, which is one of the fundamental bases of the proposed constitution. ...They are... advising Congress representatives in the Constituent Assembly to accept the procedure suggested. But they cannot be parties to any coercion of a province against its will or to the interests of the Sikhs being made to suffer by a majority in a section. In particular, any attempt to impose the basic structure of a provincial constitution, such as franchise, constituencies, etc. against the wishes of the majority of representatives from the province concerned will have to be resisted. Such an imposition would render nugatory the option to opt out which has been given to a province" (p 36-7).

It is interesting to note that some of these specific aspects of the 'Basic structure' of the constitution which Nehru had spelt out were not retained in the final text accepted by the Working Committee, and to that extent the Working Committee weakened its moral position. It is also worth reminding ourselves that, contrary to what we were told during 1974-77, the notion of a 'basic structure' for the constitution is not only meaningful but also was believed in by Jawaharlal Nehru.

#### FLUID SITUATION

As the future was to show, these efforts to meet the Muslim League as far as possible and accept the ruling of the British government, as it were under protest, were of no avail. Within eight months the country was split in two, and the Constituent Assembly, for the sake of whose early meeting Nehru had resisted the idea of resigning from the interim government, never discussed a constitution for all India. The helplessness of the Congress leaders before the onrush of communal violence and their dependence on British forces for the maintenance of peace, the evi-

dence of factionalism within the Congress which Nehru repeatedly deplored (pp 22, 27, 64)—all raise the question in one's mind whether Nehru was wise in rejecting the appeal of the Congress leftwing to resign from the Interim Government.

On 24 September 1946 he told the A.I.C.C., "Revolutionaries in other countries follow the method of breaking down the obstacles first and then rebuilding, whereas we in India under Mahatma Gandhi's guidance have succeeded in rebuilding simultaneously with breaking down obstacles. Revolutionaries in other countries, if they failed to break down the obstacles, broke down themselves in the attempt. That danger did not befall us because our movement is built on sounder foundations." (p 6).

By December 1946 it should have been clear to him that little opportunity was being given to his government to build a new political structure, and that in many parts of the country the foundations of secularism, never very strong at the best of time, had been shaken. One hundred and thirtysix documents selected here deal with his letters etc. on the future role of India in the world at large, and nine concern science and planning. Evidently, his hopes of being able to guide a free India to a progressive role in these fields sustained him in his otherwise frustrating work as the head of a disunited Interim Government.

The editing of the volume could do with some improvements. It is not always clear when a document was actually written by Nehru or represented what he said. The worst examples are the long reports marked 'confidential' on the communal situation in Bihar at pages 70, 80 and 82. Though the footnotes briefly state that the provenance of these was the Jawaharlal Nehru collection, in the actual texts Nehru is always referred to in the third person. This suggests that the editors have mistaken confidential reports of the Home department officials who accompanied Nehru as the work of Nehru. Unless the



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original texts were in Nehru's handwriting or there were notes indicating that Nehru had dictated the whole or part of them, historians should beware of treating these as Nehru's 'works'. Some elementary

editorial precautions have not been taken here.

Partha Sarathi Gupta is Professor of History at the University of Delhi.

## Limited But Useful

G.S. Rahi

Edith Wharton : A Study of Her Ethos and Art  
pp. 193, Rs. 80.00

Reviewed by Manorama Tripathi

G.S. Rahi's book on Edith Wharton, who is one of the most effective post-Jamesian women writers, is a useful contribution to the field of American studies. The attempt is characterised by an "intellectual energy" which should not be mistaken for "intellectual clarity". Rahi's central thesis is that Wharton is conservative in her aspiration as a creative writer and chooses to represent in her novels the ethos of her class, that is New York aristocratic society. The author apprehends correctly that to appreciate Wharton in her true perspective, it is almost essential to judge the precise nature of her motives which inspire her work. The opening lines of the first chapter entitled: "The Aborigines And The Invaders" reveal the heart of the matter: "Wharton's major fiction is concerned with the problems and issues of a small class of people, a class that was engaged in the establishment of an aristocratic ethos, protecting it from the onslaught of the *nouveaux riches*, and preoccupied with ideas of an elitist nature." Rahi takes up a fascinating problem of the clash between the traditional, insular society with "highly ingrown value system" and the contemporary boorish, parvenus. The split in the culture is caused by the benevolent wealth of the aristocracy that has "developed a highly codified conduct" and the aggressive, acquisitive, mercantile aristocracy.

rily on the three novels: *The House of Mirth*, *The Age of Innocence* and *Custom of The Country*. Depending heavily on the text, Rahi concludes that Wharton gives "the anthropological treatment" to her subject which is an "essential component of the novel of manners"—an issue that he discusses in detail in the chapter on "Style and Technique". Rahi emphasises that "Wharton does not see much value in the old aristocracy, or in the new for that matter, and her treatment is critical towards both." This makes her attitude "complex" as she seems to be "out of tune with the new developments" also. The reader may draw an inference after reading the chapter, which covers 53 pages, that Wharton wished to attain through her fiction "the opportunity of cultural definition rather than formal or aesthetic definition", to borrow Richard Chase's words.

The second chapter "Crushed Under the Gold Shield: The Place of Women" shows that Wharton

has given us an unprecedented variety in the delineation of feminine characters and offers "a powerful plea for a compassionate understanding of the feminine situation" as in the aristocratic society their humanity is ignored. They were either "whores or ladies", which is to say, sexual objects or decorative objects, primarily playing the "consuming role...in the society". Along with this problem "marriages", which are mostly "unhappy and unfortunate unions that are destructive and wasteful", form another issue. Wharton believes that "the desire to marry is always mixed up with motives other than sexual passion or love for the person." Still she loudly establishes the sanctity of marriage as an institution as it keeps "civilization intact" and controls its "anarchic impulses". It means Wharton favours classical and codified behaviour.

### ETHOS OF HER CLASS

The third chapter "The Dignity of a Dull Duty: Social Obligation and Personal Freedom" defines man's relationship with society; Rahi avers that Wharton prefers balance between the demands of the conventional society and the individual self. Besides, "Wharton is quite clear in projecting the idea that in a system like this, defeat is a kind of moral triumph." The adherence to the conservative ethos makes many less provided persons victim of prejudices of the aristocratic design of values, for instance, Soppo of *The Reef*, even of the author herself.

Reflecting on the narrow ethics of the novelist Rahi says "Conser-

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TOWARDS CULTURAL DEFINITION

The chapter concentrates prima-



vatism in all social matters is, after all, a cardinal faith of her ethos." If money is the chief characteristic of aristocratic respectability and etiquette its main identifying mark, in the case of new rich class money assumes an independent value without a proper relationship with ethics. Consequently, they develop "serene unimaginativeness". Rahi assesses that two things, "the restrictive nature of convention and its effect on the human personality and the drive for personal freedom which makes one break away from the social obligations of a static society have introduced a person of behavioural experimentation in the human civilization. Though feeling a sense of lost bearings nostalgically, Wharton realises the necessity of continuity. Consider, for example, her treatment of marriage in which deviation like extra-marital love and divorce are the major issues. Finally, Wharton reverts to her class attitude and recommends that "Divorce ought not to be a facile decision". She "cannot go beyond the ethos of her class" and strongly asserts the "need of an enlightened understanding of the function of convention".

Chapter fourth, "The Seductive Clink : The Role of Wealth" reproduces what has already been said in the previous two chapters from a slightly different angle. Rahi traces out how in Wharton's novels money determines the social position of the individuals and enhances beauty and order, "the quality of personality," to use Trilling's phrase. If characters like Lily in *The House of Mirth* repel ugliness and have an irresistible fascination for luxury, the new rich class delinks money from moral attributes or a sense of probity. Rahi sums up Wharton's point of view thus: "If your social and moral scruples are not applied to the business world, then your business ethics will colour your social and moral life." Even "marriage ought to have been 'transacted on the Stock Exchange', as Ralph muses in *The Custom of the Country*. Unable to rise above the ethos of her own class, Wharton defends the aristocracy on the aesthetic and moral grounds ignoring the terrible inequalities and injustices in money matters.

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Like the rest of the chapters, the fifth chapter "Style and Technique" also shows that Wharton sticks to the habit of mind of her class: "bad English" like bad "manners" is considered to be a supreme offence. Regarding style Rahi confirms two things: that Wharton's style develops slowly and gradually till it attains a naturalness characterized by "brittle epigrammatic expression" which adds a brilliance that is artificial, and that recurring metaphors, chiefly the money metaphors, and other images are "the product of situation itself". If the power of money is "articulated in the language of purse" that asserts her faith in her own culture, the images related to costume and drapery, flowers and colours and house and cuisine suggest the fulness of life.

Art images like precious procelain etc. reveal the beauty. Besides, the images provide the concrete details making her style highly dense in the physical sense. Emphasising the significance of order and beauty of language in Wharton's world, Rahi states: "All along we have witnessed how the communication among the members of the New York aristocracy has been through hieroglyphic language...we see the full force of the unspoken word and the silent gesture." Wharton's controlled style, which bears the impact of James as does her theory of fiction, undergoes prominent changes in the short stories. Rahi agrees with many critics that her later novels show signs of decline because of "the state of her mind."

#### VARIATIONS

After a detailed survey of the stylistic features, the author introduces a chapter on "Variations Upon the Themes". Going back to the study of themes strikes rather out of place. There is something awkward about the planning of this book at this juncture. However, Rahi discusses here comparatively less celebrated pieces like *Ethan Frome*—a novel about trapped sensibility. The basic preoccupations of the author remain the same, like the centrality of money and the question of the social obligations and the individual freedom. Rahi corroborates

the view of many critics of Wharton who have blamed her for keeping away from the authentic experiences and thus turning artificial.

In "Conclusion" Rahi takes into account certain factors responsible for a comparative neglect of the novelist: it could be because of the democratic set up of America that tends to ignore the existence of the aristocratic ethos; it could be for her blind adherence to those norms and rigorous sense of discipline or her snobbishness and lack of human warmth. He sums up that despite these limitations, Wharton should not be considered as a minor novelist, perhaps because of the fact that she combines in her works the 'home truths' and 'moral truths' about the aristocrats and the parvanus. There is a strange similarity in the approach of the novelist and the critic if the former fails to transcend above the limitations of her class the latter does not go very far from the conventional estimation of Wharton.

Manorama Trikha teaches English in Meerut University, Meerut.

## Books Received

Laxmi Narain and Murty, B.S., ed. *Public Enterprises and Fundamental Rights*. Bombay, N.M. Tripathi, 1984. xvi, 143 p. Rs. 55.00.

Presents many facets of the theory and implications of extending the writ jurisdiction of the courts to the autonomous public enterprises.

Ray, Anirudha. *Some Aspects of Mughal Administration*. Delhi, Kalyani, 1984. 280p. Rs. 27.00. *Paperback Rs. 55.00 Hardbound.*

The primary object of this book is to look at the tradition and change in the administrative set up as well as the practical working of the system.

*Directions for Reform : The Future of the International Monetary and Financial System—Report by a Group of Experts set up by the Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement*. Delhi, Vikas, 1984. vi, 78p. Rs. 75.00.



AMRITA SHER-GIL—A BIOGRAPHY

N. Iqbal Singh.

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REVOLUTION

Jawaharlal Nehru, 162 pp., Rs. 45

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Vol. II. 428 pp. Rs. 140.

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Vikas, pp. 447 Rs. 95

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## About the Rajya Sabha

This book\* is a close and sustained study of the working of the Rajya Sabha. The author's wide-ranging interests as a journalist and political commentator have lent a practical flavour to the treatment of the subject so that instead of being a theoretical exposition of the working of the second chamber, which is what one gets from an enthusiastic author, unaided by practical vision, here one has a wide view in which the theoretical part coming in the first chapter comes to fruition in the closing chapter, where the theoretical exposition and the practical application blend in a harmonious construction. As regards the British Parliament we have theoretical exposition in the classic, *May's Parliamentary Practice* and the practical working of the British Cabinet in Crossman diaries but experience has shown that a slightly detached view, informed by a wide knowledge of men and matters is best for dealing with a matter of this nature.

### HASTY LEGISLATION

The author leaves no part of the subject untouched, including the study of the behaviour of nominated members of Rajya Sabha and a detailed part of one chapter goes into the question of the modality of the nominations by the President of India. The concept of the Second Chamber is explored in great depth in the first chapter and after examining the theoretical concepts of Harold Laski in this century and Abbe Sieyes in France in the 18th, the trend in modern democracies, and particularly in some of the people's democracies in favour of the Second Chamber, as a healthy check on overhasty legislation is clearly brought out. Guiccardini, an Italian political thinker of the Renaissance, had mentioned in his writings the extent of overhasty legislation with excessive swinging of the pendulum in the smaller-republics of Renaissance Italy and well has our present author emphasised the healthy check on ill-conceived or hastily drafted legislation, though practical results have not been to the extent desired.

The most important function of the second chamber, as a practical construction reflecting the federal structure of our Constitution, in the way of the composition of its membership, is the way special powers have been envisioned for the Rajya Sabha, in the possible transfer of subjects from the state list to the central list as well as initiation of proposals for the creation of All India Services—which are matters basic to the Centre-State relations. These aspects are explained in great detail.

A detailed comparison is made of the Rajya Sabha's place in the scheme of second chambers in the world context and it is clear that our second chamber comes out very well in comparison, though the use of the word 'Federal' in the constitution is avoided generally which means that the founding fathers were clearly concerned with the substance and not the terminology of political structures. In fact, borrowings from the ideology or structures of foreign countries have got fused in the inner mechanism

\*N. K. Trikha, *Second Chamber of Indian Parliament*, pp. 226, *Allied*, 1984, Price Rs. 75.00.

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EDITOR : AMRIK SINGH



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of our political thinking, so that what comes out is what is best suited to the requirements of the country.

## WATCHDOG FUNCTIONS

In the chapter on Rajya Sabha's role as a second chamber, a lot of detail has been given on how the Rajya Sabha has performed its watchdog functions and even where formal powers may be lacking, how this lack has been made up in imaginative handling of situations and there is a practical substitute in the Rajya Sabha for the detailed budget discussion in the Lok Sabha so that even the Lok Sabha's special position in respect of 'Money Bills' does not erode from the position of the Rajya Sabha. The Rajya Sabha's relations with the Lok Sabha are also explored in detail and particularly imaginative and deft handling of situations by the Chairmen of the respective chambers. The chapter on Composition and Structure of the Rajya Sabha gives considerable importance to the federal structure and how it is envisioned and the chapter on Rules & Procedure clearly indicates that absence of a detailed procedure has not hampered a workable system—but a way has been found for the association of the Rajya Sabha with the work of the Estimates Committee and the Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament. The author goes into great detail where political scandals of considerable magnitude have got exposed in the Rajya Sabha and how corrective action has been taken in time.

On the whole, this is a timely book, which explains an important part of our democratic structure particularly on the side of Central & State relations and it is sure that the book will have a wide readership among intellectuals, students and everyone of us concerned with the working of our democratic system.

*P. S. Habeeb Mohamed, a member of the I.A.S., is currently Vice-Chancellor of Kerala University, Trivandrum.*

## Public Enterprises in India

M. D. Agrawal and B. L. Mathur, Editors

Public Enterprises in India

pp. 200, Ramesh Book Depot, Jaipur, 1983, Rs. 50.00

Reviewed by Bhupendra Hooja

Over the years, a new 'culture' has developed in the publishing trade, especially where the publication of books of comparatively 'dry and barren' subjects of social science like economics, political science or public administration etc. is concerned. This is the culture of compilations of essays being published in honour of some well known personality. I am not sure whether this practice has any academic or commercial merit or whether it is inevitable in the present situation of a limited reading public.

The book under review belongs to this category, and has been brought out in honour of Dr. Om Prakash of the University of Rajasthan, ex-Vice Chancellor and a senior professor in Department of

Economic Administration and Financial Management on the occasion of his 55th birthday. It has been edited by two of his colleagues, and many others have contributed essays on various aspects of public enterprises in India. As such the book lacks a pattern or systematic approach to the study of a complex subject. The overall impression even from the contents and the names of the contributors is that it has been either put together hurriedly or perhaps many outside contributors could not respond to the editors' invitation. Though some aspects of public enterprises have been covered, there are many noticeable gaps, and there is no continuity of theme.

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MANAGEMENT

Among the notable contributions by eminent persons once directly concerned with the management of public enterprises, one may mention Mond. Fazal's paper on public sector in India. Though it is fairly general in its canvass and approach after spelling out the objectives of public enterprises, Fazal has given a brief review of the extent to which some of these have been achieved. It is true that public sector activities have expanded considerably and now cover a wide spectrum of the core sector and strategic industries. At the national (or central) level, government investments have risen from Rs. 29 crore at the end of 1951 to Rs. 16,000 crore at the end of March 1979, (Rs. 21126 crores in 185 central units by end of March, 1981, as reported separately by S. Banerjee of the New Delhi Bureau of Public Enterprises). It is true that some part of "self-reliance" has been achieved in these core sectors; and to some extent regional and social imbalances have also been curtailed, besides providing employment opportunities to nearly 19 lakh persons (each person having an annual average income of Rs. 11,000) and so on. But it is not clear whether certain other objectives such as "effective equitable distribution of incomes" or the "generation of surpluses for reinvestment" have been achieved.

Many other contributors besides Mohd. Fazal like R.S. Kulshreshtha, M.D. Agarwal or B.L. Mathur have examined and emphasised the need for profitability of the public enterprises and the generation of surpluses for reinvestment.

Fazal has also briefly touched upon the quiet but a major managerial revolution in the public enterprises by the overall managerial group numbering more than 1 lakh, which is roughly three times the size of the All India and Central Services. This new breed of managers has brought about many reforms and improvements, for which their training and development of human resources has been an important contributory factor. Some managerial and personnel problems and policies and practices have been discussed



by other contributors viz. Managerial Autonomy by Jagdish Prakash, Management of State Government Enterprises by G.D. Sharma, Personnel Policy Aspects by Lallan Prasad or Training and Management Development by Reeta Sharma.

#### A NEW DESIGN

P.L. Tandon, another well known personality (started in the private sector but later on joined the public sector undertakings and left his mark on some of which he had the good fortune to lead), has described "*a new design*" for the public sector undertakings based on "*clear objectives at every level*" and backed up with suitable structures and systems capable of managerial control and capability. What has appealed to the present reviewer is Tandon's strong advice that the public enterprise in India should be changed from the 'state' to a 'public' ownership. The implications and the shifts in styles of control with such a desirable change should be obvious. Under his new design, the capital structure would be raised and assured by "a majority contribution of the people and a minority with the state". This would introduce a new capital structure and initiate a new system of ownership and control.

To the various arguments and suggestions given by Tandon, the reviewer would like to add and stress the role and responsibility of the staff and the workers of the enterprise concerned who should also be allowed to participate in the equity capital and who need to be involved in the overall (directorial) control and the day to day management of the enterprise through appropriate devices. That would be possible through some arrangement for full-fledged participation of workers and professional or technical employees of the unit. Under the new dispensation, as has also been recommended by Tandon, there should be at least, a "two-tier system of control" viz: i) the Board System (to quote Tandon) or a Supervisory Board, and ii) a Managerial Board. The former type would comprise of the head of the enterprise interacting with public figures, representatives of the Parliament or State, persons from the fields of science

and technology, representatives from buyers and suppliers, and financial institutions and consumers (through their cooperatives or established or recognised institutions), while the second type of the Managing Board should be mainly functional and comprise of professional executives or technocrats, full-time officials as well as trade union representatives.

Naturally, besides these managerial control arrangements, accountability to the Parliament (or the State Assembly as the case may be) and the overall control and guidance of the political executive will have to be provided for though, according to Tandon, this may not be necessary or desirable, because the new system would abolish the need for multifarious controls...of the Bureau of Public Enterprises, the Public Undertaking Committee, the Public Estimates Committee, Auditor General, Commercial Audit and so on:

He has also suggested, and rightly so, that the role and the responsibility of a "public sector" manager will always be different from a "private sector" manager, because the former is operationally responsible to the public as an investor, besides being increasingly more responsive to public interest, specially in any "monopoly" or "semi-monopoly" area of public enterprise. He has also urged that the public sector should move "away from present administrative joint family culture" in which major decisions regarding appointment of senior management personnel or raising of long-term funds through equity or debentures, and/or acquisition of new assets as well as diversification of activities lie "with administration and politics and not with the operational management". This (and such other) is an advice born out of the contributor's wide and intimate experience and deserves careful consideration by the policy-makers and the academicians.

#### AIMS & OBJECTIVES

In his short contribution, Henry Schloss of the University of Southern California, USA, writing briefly about the performance of public enterprises in the less developed countries (LDCs) as compared to developed

countries like the USA, has explained that the performance of the public enterprises should be measured against one or more of the reasons (or objectives) for which these have been set up, such as (i) the lack of private capital or private entrepreneurship or (ii) an ideological bias against their private ownership or (iii) the aim to step up physical production irrespective of profits or (iv) the goal to produce and provide goods at a low price (even if subsidised) or (v) a keenness to act as a catalyst for new enterprises or (vi) the objective to maximise employment. To say the least, this is a very pragmatic and valuable recommendation.

These aims and objectives highlight the public purpose of a public enterprise as against the "private purpose" of a private enterprise which is profit optimisation. However, Schloss has not ignored the need or desirability of profit optimisation as one of the objectives of any public enterprise. But taking up the case of running a branch line of a rail-road in uneconomic circumstances, he has suggested that rather than obscure the total performance of the rail-road (by adding the working results of the branch to the aggregate) the subsidy element for the uneconomic branch-line may be indicated distinctly or by making the subsidy more explicit. On the face of it, this is a good and sound suggestion. Similarly, by mentioning the example of electricity and other services in the LDCs, he has suggested that comparisons with more developed or industrialised countries like the USA or Europe are not reasonable, because in the less developed countries, the purpose of a public enterprise or the criteria for its efficiency can be other than profit optimisation.

#### FOREIGN COLLABORATION

Surveying the Indian scene, in its broad perspective, and reviewing the various stages of development since the Industrial Policy Resolution of April, 1948, S. Banerjee of the Bureau of Public Enterprises, has drawn attention to the scope and nature, as well as problems of foreign collaboration, both technical and financial, "as an important



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method of securing access to the foreign resources, techniques and skills for sustaining and increasing the tempo of industrial development and for transfer of technology for industrial development". He has suggested that whereas in the case of private sector enterprises, foreign collaboration agreements are intended to maximise profits, in the case of public sector, which has to be more selective in accepting foreign collaborations, some other implications have to be considered such as the need for import substitution, or creation of employment opportunities or environmental control etc. He has given some relevant information about foreign equity participation, which on 31st March, 1981, stood at Rs. 17 crore in respect of 12 major enterprises.

He has mentioned Madras Fertilizers, Madras Refineries, Indian Telephone Industries & Cochin Refineries as some of the major beneficiaries. While discussing various objects for foreign collaboration, particularly the aspect of Research and Development (R & D) he has given the example of Durgapur Steel Plant, where remodelling and overhauling of the machinery and plant has become important. He has also cited examples of various consultancy and contract groups in which case, technical fees are paid to the collaborators e.g. Engineering Project India Limited (EPIL) which has a collaboration with a firm in USA. He has also picked out four countries including UK, USA, Federal Republic of Germany and Japan with which most of industrial collaboration agreements have been signed during the last 2 or 3 decades, with Britain leading the table with 1534 collaboration out of the total (or 23% during 1957 to 1981) as compared to 1382 agreements with USA, 1173 with FRG and 557 with Japan. It is worth noting, however, that since 1980s (and particularly in the year 1980) the number of such agreements has gone up considerably.

#### PROFITABILITY

Kulshreshta, an ex-faculty member has made his comments with some relevant facts on the "profitability" of public enterprises. According to

him "the low profitability has shaken the faith and the confidence of the public in public enterprises". He has urged that public enterprises must pass the test by way of returns, on investment. M.D. Agrawal and B.L. Mathur have also made a similar plea while presenting the case study of Air India and the management of inventories in public enterprises.

#### JOINT SECTOR PATTERN

Two other contributions of financial management of public enterprises are worth taking note of. Brij Kishore of Osmania University, Hyderabad, has rightly observed that "financing strategies" of public enterprises have not been evolved or adopted adequately in the country, perhaps because the state has been the sole (or the main) financier. As a result, individual units have not had the "freedom" (one should say any challenge) to evolve their own financial strategies. After briefly discussing the conven-

tional systems (or rules and procedures) of financing which have meant, among other things, the exclusion of private capital, a low-pegged debt equity ratio of 1:1 and low-pegged interest rates on term loans, mainly from the government controlled financial institutions, and expecting that the undertakings should make credit arrangements for their "working capital" with the banks, the writer has also observed some hopeful signs of a slow and gradual change in some of these matters.

He has advocated the adoption of the "joint sector" pattern of investment and management, which has been gradually on the increase. But his recommendations in the main are that the public undertakings should move away from government supplied finances to "autonomous (financial) strategies" (a) by going to the market and financial institutions to obtain external funds, (b) by increasingly aiming at the creation of surpluses for self-financing and also (c) by

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venturing to undertake deficit financing. In other words, he would like the public enterprises to face the market test of "efficiency and profitability" on the basis of its autonomous and self-reliant strategies of financial management. He has suggested that the hopes of receiving compensation or subsidies from the government can make the managements lack in their performance, while in fact cost efficiency and control should be their main responsibility.

Incidentally dealing with a slightly different aspect, N.D. Mathur, a faculty member of one of the colleges in northwest Rajasthan, has been critical of the "price" or "purchase preference" policy of the government biased in favour of public enterprises. His view seems to be that such an approach is not conducive to strengthening the competitive capacity of our industries, because the public sector units would have no incentives or inclinations to reduce their costs or to increase their capacity to compete. Secondly, his argument is that operating in a "mixed economy" the government should give equal treatment to both public and private sectors.

#### FINANCIAL STRUCTURE

Another important contribution on the financial systems or organisations of public undertakings is by Arti Khosla of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms. She has outlined the historical development and the structure of financial arrangements of the Indian Railways which, according to her, have a measure of flexibility to cope with the growing activities and social burdens of the railways system. But going through her brief descriptive piece, one is left with the question as to how (and when) finances of the Indian Railways can (or would) ever come out of the present state of uncertainty and fluctuation, if at all.

As she has herself conceded, one of the main problems of the management has been the utter inadequacy of funds in view of the needs of widespread expansion of

the network and field of operations. Since the Railways depend upon the "plan funds" from the Government of India, for the VIth Five Year Plan period, they will have to make do with only 50 per cent of the investment requirements for acquisition and replacement of the rolling stock or for track renewals and other line capacity works or for modernisation and better amenities for the passengers. Obviously, the Indian Railways must initiate or activate alternate strategies and explore new sources for resource mobilisation, though Arti Khosla has not tried to spell out the same. Perhaps some earlier suggestions of Brij Kishore can be useful in this regard.

#### BANKING SYSTEM

Since the Banking System has gained an unusual importance of its own in the country and since, over the years, a large number of important banking institutions have been nationalised, it is but natural and encouraging that there are at least two useful and timely contributions on the subject, one by K.K. Jha, Development Manager, State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur and other by R.C. Gupta, a faculty member of the University of Rajasthan. The former has emphasised the need for "development of human resources" in the changing system or structure of public sector banking in the country, which has now been entrusted with an entirely new set of social and economic objectives and has been made much more responsive and alive to the credit needs of the rural sector or the weaker sections of the society than before and has been called upon to undertake, what may be called, "development banking". A new social responsibility, a new sympathetic outlook and a "humanised" approach are some of the qualities required and new features of banking which need to be cultivated amongst the staff or "the human resources".

R.C. Gupta, however, has tried to suggest some structural changes for reorganisation in the entire banking system. Aimed at reducing regional imbalances or for speeding up economic development,

as also for elimination of wasteful competition through economies of skill and improved customer service, and for such other allied aims and objectives, he has suggested the establishment of about half a dozen regional or national banks instead of the present two dozen or more national banks. Since the proposal has not been sketched out in detail, it is not possible to make any fruitful comment on this proposal, though the broad aims and objectives for his plea of reorganisation are quite appropriate and welcome.

At the end of the book there is a joint contribution by Ramesh K. Arora of the Department of Public Administration and Satish Batra, a faculty member of a local college, which presents a broad view of the role of the Rajasthan State Legislative Assembly Committee on Public Undertakings. According to the authors, the Committee has done significant work in respect of "large" public undertakings, but it could not make any detailed enquiries into the functioning of smaller units. In some respects, the Committee appeared to have made an intrusion into matters which should have been best left to the boards. Or in other words, it has been like a "Watch Dog Committee" waiting to pounce upon the managements or the government departments concerned, as soon as it smelt something odd.

As mentioned earlier, there is one more contribution on public undertakings under the management of the State Government by G.D. Sharma of the University of Rajasthan. Briefly, he has pointed out how close or firm appears to be the control of the State Government (and the politicians or the political executive) on the various state-level public undertakings, and how, because of the wide range of their activities, these units are facing, each are of them, the growing and continuing four-fold problems of finances, managerial capacity, professional competence and co-ordination.

#### MANAGERIAL & FINANCIAL

Apparently, this a short but many-pronged or multifoci study of various aspects of state (public)



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enterprises in India, their general role or responsibility and their day-to-day functioning and management. The overall approach seems to converge particularly on the managerial and financial aspects, with a significant number of contributions having a pronounced and welcome bias towards managerial and commercial efficiency, profitability and professional competence as well as competitiveness of the state (public) sector undertakings almost on equal footing with private sector units. The overall social and economic objectives which have been mentioned by one or two contributors seem to have been taken for granted as there has been no critical examination of the same. Nor have any of the undertakings been evaluated against these set objectives. In a short compilation,

the editors as well as the contributors have tried to cover a varied and wide ground, with the result that one can only have a brief peep into some scattered aspects of the sprawling public sector. There is no central theme or link of continuity to establish the unity of the compilation. Yet, what has been put together in a condensed, though random, form should be of interest to our policy-makers, project directors on public sector managers, academicians and students of the public sector in various disciplines, such as economic and business management, political science and public administration and so on.

*Bhupendra Hooja, after his retirement from the IAS, lives in Jaipur.*

## Modernising Rural Youth

M. S. Raghuvanshi

*Modernising Rural Youth—On the Role of Formal Education*  
pp. xx+306, Ajanta Publications, 1984, Rs. 150.00

Reviewed by P. C. Bansal

M.S. Raghuvanshi's *Modernising Rural Youth* is the outcome of a doctoral dissertation in sociology. It aims at identifying the elements of modernisation among the rural youth, to measure it and to examine the effect of formal education in particular and other life experiences such as marital status, type of family, socio-economic status and exposure to modernising forces in general on modernity. The study takes its theoretical stance from the work of Alex Inkeles, David Lerner and J.A. Kahl.

### NEW TERM

Modernisation is a new term for social change. It is the opposite of traditionism. It refers to the total transformation in the life of the people involving a series of interdependent and interpenetrating changes in personality, culture and society. It covers the whole variety of institutional areas—family, polity, economy, religion, education etc. The study focuses on indivi-

dual modernity or modernisation of personality which is a social psychological concept. Individual modernity is considered as a dependent variable and includes attitudinal modernity and behavioural modernity.

The research design makes use of survey research and comparative method. It treats the independent variables as antecedent and intervening variables. The antecedent variables include level of village modernity and family socio-economic background variables. The

intervening variables cover marital status, formal education and exposure to modernity forces. The resultant variable is dependent variable, it comprises respondent's individual modernity covering attitudinal and behavioural aspects.

The field work was done during March-June 1975. The data was collected from 326 rural youths between the age group of 18 and 20 years from three villages which are characterised as high, medium and low on modernity. The three villages are from Galhot Satha region of Meerut Division, Uttar Pradesh. The subjects are Hindu Rajputs of Galhot sub-caste from agricultural families. Thus it is a homogeneous group. The data was collected through interview and questionnaires like attitudinal modernity questionnaire and behavioural modernity questionnaire. These instruments were pretested and have adequate reliability and validity. The data has been analysed with statistical tests like cross tabulation technique, chi-square, factor analysis, analysis of variance, correlation, partial correlation and multiple regression analysis.

The findings indicate, that there is a common dimension among the various items of individual modernity scale. Marital status and type of family of the respondent's origin are not associated with modernity. The level of village modernisation score is associated in limited way with modernity score. Out of the family socio-economic status variables, education, level of family occupational mobility of family members, gross per capita income, standard of living and organisational participation are associated with attitudinal modernity.

Among the intervening variables

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of respondent's exposure to modernity forces, formal education, mass media-contact, participation in formal organisation and outside contact are related significantly with individual modernity. Out of the respondent's exposure to modernity forces, formal education (number of years of school and college education) exerts a profound influence on rural youth.

#### FORMAL EDUCATION

Formal education affects the value orientation and behavioural aspects of modernity in general, but in the areas of change proneness and sense of efficacy the impact of education has not been pronounced, but achievement orientation and democratic orientation have been influenced markedly by education. Formal education alone has been able to explain about 59% variation in attitudinal modernity and 50% variation in behavioural modernity. Taken as a whole, the independent variables are able to account for 46% of the variation of individual attitudinal modernity.

So education is a powerful factor in bringing about modernisation in rural youth. The next factor in importance is mass media exposure. This can help in changing the attitude and values of the rural youth. Out of the family socio-economic factors the two important variables for modernisation are level of family education and standard of living. So the need of the hour is to impart education to village people and to expose them to mass media through Radio, Television and other field publicity material like cinema shows and posters etc., and through agricultural extension and family planning agencies. It will widen the mental outlook of the village folk and compensate to some extent the family socio-economic variables mentioned above to some extent.

In short this is a nicely written book, is easily readable and can be read with profit by teachers and students of social sciences and others who are interested in the welfare of village people. There is a need for such studies in different parts of the country both in rural and urban. On the plus

point, the design of the study and statistical analysis of the data is sound, there are references to Indian studies which makes it more relevant in the Indian context. However, the reviewer begs to differ with the author's observation on page 61 and the reference from John H. Kunkel (1965 : 269). Another point is the omission of index, which is shown in table of contents on page 307. It would have added to the value of the book for the researcher if the modernity questionnaire developed by the author

had been incorporated in the Appendix. Yogendra Singh has written a stimulating foreword. The reviewer hopes that M. S. Raghuvanshi will publish the ICSSR's project—Modernising Effects of Formal Education: A Longitudinal Study in a Rural Setting. The author deserves compliments for his endeavour.

*P.C. Bansal is a Psychologist at the Selection Centre South, Bangalore.*

## The Indian English Short Story

M. K. Naik, Editor

The Indian English Short Story

pp. 280, *Arnold Heinemann*, 1984, Rs. 45.00

Reviewed by M. C. Gabriel

Someone is not doing his homework at Arnold-Heinemann. It is difficult to put one's finger on the person or department which is at fault but after the briefest glance at the book under review this suspicion can barely be kept to oneself without fear of exploding because with every page you turn and every paragraph you read, it grows. Arnold-Heinemann are said to be among the better known and larger publishing houses and it beats one's understanding how such publishers could put their name to a book as badly produced. Indeed it is so badly done that one would expect not just Arnold-Heinemann but any company calling itself a publishing house or for that matter even a book-store doing occasional publishing to hesitate to have its name on it. Before any reader begins to think that all this is only a reviewer's malice let me give you one example from the very first page of this book.

#### MIX-UP

The opening story in the book is 'Greater Love' by Cornelia Sorabjee. So the table of contents tells us and so it is set at the top of the story. But in the Acknowledgements the name of the author of

the story is given as Cornelia Sorabji. This could be Naik's fault. Naik is, we believe, responsible for this book though he is variously described on the dust jacket as the man who has 'edited' this book and inside on the title page as the one who has 'chosen' and 'introduced' these representative stories. While the Publishers are in some uncertainty about Naik's work on the book Naik also is in some doubt about the author of 'Greater Love'. On the first page of his 'critical introduction' he believes it is written by 'Comella Sorabji, the first woman advocate in Calcutta'. In the very next paragraph he thinks it is Cornelia Sorabji and by the time he comes to the end of the introduction and lists her among his references, she has become 'Conelia Sorabji'. To add just one excruciating instance from inside the book Mrs Jhabvala becomes on the page where her story appears, R P Bhabvala. Small wonder that after three decades of gallant struggling she finally fled from the country?

Who does one hold responsible for this kind of work? To anyone who knows a little about publishing it speaks of inefficiency at so many levels that it would appear as if the book had got produced while all of Arnold-Heinemann were on a holiday. No one has cared to edit,



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design, proofread or have this book properly printed and bound. On the table or on the shelf this volume will draw attention to itself by simple hideousness. It is not a free publication; it is priced. If you want it you are expected to pay Rs. 45.00 for it. It is true that a book of 280 pages in hard covers at current pricing rates is cheap at Rs. 45.00, but so little effort has been invested in it to give it value apart from whatever merit the book intrinsically contains that to ask any money for it seems an offence. A painful stringency has been exercised in budgeting this book, so that it has come hashed up like a dinner concocted from leftovers.

From the above description one would wonder if such a book ever got sold. It would justifiably be assumed that it wouldn't but the assumption would be wrong. This particular book of Arnold-Heinemann is not presented here as an exception but as a representative specimen of a large number of

publications. Some years ago an edition of a well-known book of an even better-known author was issued opening with the second chapter, followed by the first! In another case an anthology of verse had the last word of the last line of a poem (also the last I think) printed upside down! As far as I know these books have been issued subsequently. This means that they were sold by the redoubtable enterprise of the publisher in that form. It is obvious then that there is an arrangement or a system by which such faulty goods can also be pushed and disposed of. If there weren't neither Arnold-Heinemann nor any of the others would be issuing books of this kind.

#### WHO BUYS ?

And if that is true, who are the buyers of such books? It looks unlikely that any man in his senses could be persuaded to part with his money for them. Well then, who buys

them? And buys them in quantities large enough to support the industry? Obviously there are places where books are bought in the cynical belief that they will not be read and that lapses of the kind we have talked about will never be noticed by anyone. There is perhaps a normal institutional channel which on demand of occasion can be converted into a waste disposal system. How this happens is not part of this review to discuss. Nor is the question worth pursuing, for each step forward can only take us into the Kafkaesque world in which every answer to a question is really the question to the next answer which is again a question to.....

However another related question remains: Why is Naik quiet about it? Why doesn't he kick up a storm? Even though it is only a compilation he has enough stake in it to raise a row—the book goes under his name. High-souled as these questions, they are even as

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futile. If Naik makes a noise, he is sure to mar his relations with his publisher beyond repair. He is I guess like any other author in this country, a man hopelessly small and powerless as compared with his opponent who may not be the richest man but in the existing system has a decided advantage. While the publisher can always throw the author out on his ear, the best the author can do is go to another publisher and at the rate at which these diseases of shoddiness and discourtesy are spreading, he will in all probability end up with a worse house. Under the circumstances it seems to me the agency that can be most effective from the author's side is the Authors' Guild. Since we now talk of the book as intellectual property and the right of the author to have it protected, the kind of production that harms the interests of a book could be made cognisable as damage to property. And it is very real damage too. In a business like publishing, which depends so much on trust and good faith, this procedure could lead to a lot of bad blood and endless arbitration, but perhaps it is not beyond the power and ability of the Authors' Guild to get printers' and publishers' federations round to the table and talk to them and come to a kind of gentleman's understanding on the treatment of 'property'.

#### DESERVES ATTENTION

Naik's book is no masterpiece but had it not been so badly marred in production it would have been good value for the money. It goes all to his credit that he has been able to ferret out pieces which, whatever their literary value, do much to establish the geneology of the Indian story in English. If only for this one reason Naik's anthology deserves attention. Some of the readers may consider this long prelude something of a waste of breath for the kind of book on which it is written. The answer to that would be that the nature of the book is not the point and in any case the book itself is not without merit. The distinction achieved may be minor but it is certain that Naik gives us in this book some of the

writings (including that of the much manhandled Cornelia Sorabjee) which beyond doubt will soon be lost to most Indian readers. It is highly unlikely that story-tellers as good as Nagarajan, Chettur and Venkataramani will be heard of some years later. Apart from doing this service, Naik has within the limits of his small book made his selection historically representative. He gives us a taste of the usual outstanding writers R K Narayan, Raja Rao and Ruth Prawar Jhabvala about whose stories no comment is required. For those who may miss his impenetrable prose there is also a story (with the novelty 'she—peacock' thrown in for good measure) by Mulk Raj Anand. Historically it would be necessary to include Anand but the real reason in this case seems to be that Naik is something of an Anand scholar having already made a selection of his short stories. Then as if to give aesthetic balance to the selection he presents mediocrity at its most readable in K. A. Abbas, Khushwant Singh and Nergis Dalal, who however lukewarm this view of their talent may be, do have a place in the Indian story—English short story.

## An Attempt to Adapt

S. Parmaji

Distance Education

pp. 160, Sterling, 1984, Rs. 75.00

Reviewed by Ruddar Datt

The book under review is a collection of papers written by educationists, management experts, distance education specialists who have tried to present their perspective and perception about distance education. Distance education is associated with correspondence education and education through radio, television etc. The principal focus of the book is on the capacity of Distance Education in catering to the needs of general and professional education.

#### ORIGIN AND SCOPE

Marlowe Edgar discusses the

Of those that remain there are Manohar Malgaonkar for narrative pace and the always rather self-conscious Anita Desai. Almost making a place for itself by virtue of its extraordinary tension and power is Arun Joshi's *Homecoming*. It must be admitted that Arun Joshi is the most worthwhile practising talent in Indian—English fiction. Coming away from his brooding gloom towards light we have Ruskin Bond's story *I don't climb trees anymore* made of sheer delicacy and charm. He also makes an interesting contrast to Kewlian Sio who writes a somewhat precious prose and Like Bond is telling us a sentimental story but is unable to save it from sentimentality. All this taken together is as good a mix as one can hope to find between two covers. It could be said that Naik's choices could have been less routine. But in this matter, though many readers may find it difficult to believe, critics are overruled by etiquette: they may not advise the host on his special brand of poison for the party.

MC Gabriel looks after publishing in the North Eastern Hill University, Shillong.

origin and scope of Correspondence education. Correspondence Courses are especially offered to accommodate students who are unable to attend classes on the campus due to physical disability, full time employment or who want another degree to help them in vertical mobility. He outlines three kinds of courses to meet three different kinds of demand on the country's educational system (i) educational (ii) training and (iii) general. Educational goals include development of literate persons. This necessitates extension or duplication of campus courses. Training goals involve development of skills to assist individuals to be productive



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in the world of work. Job and occupation education is significant pertaining to the concept of education. General education includes course work pertaining to recreational skills of individuals or to satisfy curiosities of individuals. Though Distance Education covers all these, the basic purpose of distance education is to provide equality of opportunity, by extending education to everyone, no matter how humble his worth, no matter where he may live, and no matter what his reasonable aspirations may be. In view of the fact that correspondence courses are expected to meet the needs of those who have been denied opportunities, they have to be flexible.

Mrs. Usha V. Reddy discusses the role of mass media in Distance Teaching. Mass media include print, radio, television or films which are impersonal and thus a direct one-to-one relationship is not possible with their use. The question raised in this context is: Can education through mass media be effective on its own? The author answers in the negative. She further states: Repeated studies have found that the most effective form of communication is the transmission of information through mass media supplemented by face-to-face interaction. To be effective, media teaching has to be woven into an entire system of teaching with all its supporting activities.

#### OPEN UNIVERSITY

S. Parmaji in a very analytical article "Open University"—A Conceptual Framework" discusses the role of the Open University as against the traditional university. By and large, the society and the teacher tend to control the educational system by imposing many restrictions on the students which are spatial, temporal, procedural and normative in nature. As a consequence, the under-privileged dropouts are kept out of the fold of tertiary education for ever and this resulted in the emergence of sub-standard commercial institutions which offered help at unreasonably high costs to the candidates who aspired to get external degrees.

On the other hand, the Open University is open in the sense that it can enrol students without any entry qualifications, it is possible in this system to go fast or slow, to stop or to start, to take unusual combination, of courses to retake failed courses or to 'drop in' again after having 'dropped out'.

The chief merit of the Open University system is that it is a low cost educational technology with a capacity to reach out to people in far flung areas, catering to the needs of the learners. In this sense, the system overcomes the limitations relating to spatial temporal and procedural restraints.

Parmaji has also indicated the limitations of the Correspondence System. For instance, the computer marked assignments cannot assess the personality of the student in all its dimensions. Parmaji writes: "The computer 'can assess only certain aspects of achievements of students. The totality of the personality of the students and its achievements are too complex to be assessed with the help of a computer.'" (p. 29) The use of radio and television, though significant in its own way, will form only a small part of the university's input.

Three major shortcomings associated with the Open University system are:

- i) Lack of student-teacher and student-student rapport;
- ii) Over-dependence on correspondence material; and
- iii) Relative obsolescence of the information communicated.

Absence of interaction between teachers and students is a major shortcoming of the system. The time lag between the generation of doubt and the contact with the teacher may be so long that the doubt itself might get blurred and

vanish. Similarly, the time lag between the receipt and the return of response sheet after correction may be so long that the student does not get enthused to use this medium. Besides, excessive dependence on the notes received from the Open University may result in making the student a stranger to the original source materials and to the mass of literature in the subject.

#### MISPLACED OPTIMISM

Questioning the apparent low cost of the Open University system and the services it is expected to render to the underprivileged classes, Parmaji writes: "Though the social cost of Open University education could be relatively less, the personal cost involved in the payment of the huge fees, in acquiring radio and TV sets, in getting audio and visual cassettes, kits and other educational paraphernalia would be quite prohibitive even for the upper middle classes. So to claim that the Open University system would serve the underdog would be a misplaced optimism." (p. 37) In U.K., it has been found that the Open University serves the middle classes and the upper middle classes only. Parmaji thinks "In a poor country like India, about 64% of people are illiterate. Of the 36% literates more than half could be conceived to be of such low educational calibre that they would not be in a position to avail of the tertiary educational possibilities offered by the open university system. Only top 10—15% of the population from the elite and upper middle classes could conceivably be the potential clientele of the open university system." (p. 37) This is a conclusion which needs serious consideration by policy makers if

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they are to make the Open University serve the educational needs of the poor and the under-privileged in India.

Another shortcoming of the Open University system is that it aims at producing generalists by offering foundation courses as against the objectives of traditional university which aims at producing specialists and experts in various fields. Parmaji, therefore, rightly concludes: "No institution could be a substitute to the other, each having a specific role to play in its own way. No institution can supplant the other. They would continue to serve the society in their own ways, each supplementing the efforts made by the other." (p. 41)

## MESSAGE

The message of the book is that correspondence education to be effective needs to be supported by relatively longer duration contact programmes and practical work sessions. In professional and technical subjects, where practical demonstration, supervision in laboratory work, survey and practical experiences are needed, theory can be taught by correspondence in conjunction with 'on the job' practical experience and by organizing short-resident sessions. Suraksha Pal explaining the role of corresponding education in technical and professional courses writes: "Technical subjects like costing, accounting, computer programming etc. need students to be equipped with the practical knowledge. Hence, short-term contact programmes prove to be of a greater significance for organizing correspondence instruction in job-oriented courses. The University of Delhi did the pioneering work for starting correspondence courses and include short-residential-sessions as part of its correspondence teaching for undergraduates." (p. 105)

The book is a useful addition to the literature on Distance Education in India. Besides giving information on the Distance Education Institutes in Africa, Australia, U.K. and India, it critically examines the scope and limitations of Distance Education.

It also highlights the need for making correspondence education a really low cost technique in an underdeveloped country like India. The apish tendency to transplant the techniques used in developed

countries in underdeveloped countries may defeat the objectives set out for Distance Education.

*Ruddar Datt is Principal of the School of Correspondence Courses, University of Delhi.*

## Pakistan : Society & Politics

Pandav Nayak, Editor

Pakistan : Society & Politics

pp. 239, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 1984

Reviewed by Alok Sinha

It is an unfortunate cultural legacy of colonialism that the literati and the intellectuals of the Third World are more concerned with imbibing and then quoting—almost ad nauseam—existing knowledge about the West, Japan, and Super Power politics than with acquiring new knowledge about their own native hearth, home and soil. The caricature of western social behaviour as exemplified in our own *Toady Bachas* of yesteryears has only given way to a similar intellectual subjugation wherein the past of the past masters is held to be more important than our own affairs.

One obvious illustration of this truth is the steadfast refusal of our so-called national press to post their correspondents in the super power capitals and at the same time to foolishly ignore our immediate neighbours of South Asia. Similarly, our social scientists do not seem to be much bothered about the multi-faceted political economies of the Third World.

## TOTALISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Seen in this light, the South Asia Studies Centre of the University of Rajasthan is to be complimented for having called a seminar to discuss the society and politics of Pakistan. In the words of its Director, Ramakant, "it has been our long-standing feeling that the State of Pakistan warrants an inquiry from a totalistic perspective which alone can yield a balanced view of the problems besetting its

state structure". Which is true, since no competent body before in India has ever thought of giving adequate thinking to understand our former fellow colonial subjects and present international neighbours. Pandav Nayak, who had organised this seminar, has edited well and brought out for publication the seminar papers.

One may not agree with all the views in this collection, yet they are not only thought-provoking but enlightening as well, if only because they focus on a relevant subject which has not been touched well before by us. In that sense, they make necessary reading for all who claim to be interested in the fate of democracies and the consequent authoritarianisation of politics in Third World countries. More, they make essential reading for all thinking Indians—for we must be constantly alert and aware about what is happening to communities which are religiously and culturally akin to us, so that we may be able to avert their tragic path of authoritarianism, military rule, irrational and harmful religious fundamentalism, and national disunity.

Nayak's collection professedly seeks to give a totalistic view of Pakistan. Unfortunately, one cannot say the same for his Introduction, which indulges in some clichés which sound more fundamentalist than totalist. For example, to imply that the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD)'s crushing "would only amount to postponing the crisis for a later date" might have seemed realistic



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to the short-sighted in 1982 when the Seminar was held, but in 1984 it only looks like a hasty conclusion, since the fundamentalist wave, sweeping West Asia and then on till our own borders and perhaps even beyond, has put paid presently to any democratic upsurge. Such irrational fundamentalism may postpone this "inevitable" (whatever this unspecified thing may be) for decades! Again to say as Nayak says, that "the non-federal character of the military in Pakistan whose domination is continuously on the increase is a sure invitation to exploding the unresolved national question beyond controllable proportions" sounds like an aggressive neighbour's wishful thinking, especially since this strong forecast has not been substantiated.

#### MILITARY RULE

On the other hand, Nayak is correct in suggesting not only that "the military in Pakistan, propped and buttressed by imperial aid and assistance, have successfully thrown overboard both democracy and constitutional propriety" and sabotaged elections in both 1959 and 1977 not because they were inherently against the concept of elections but because their only political allies, the forces of fundamentalism (Jamaat-e-Islami) get badly exposed when the popular voice is given full sway. In the elections of 1970, the Jamaat-e-Islami polled only 5.3% of the polled votes!

Other papers in this collection are equally interesting and revealing. A.A. Engineer makes the valid, though not often touted, point that the State system of Pakistan—irrespective of its mask and professions—does not conform to what is enjoined by the Koran because "the so-called fundamentalists all over the world are using Islamic jargon to throw dust in the eyes of their own people and push under the carpet serious contradictions which they cannot resolve by maintaining the status quo, and the ruling classes in Pakistan are playing no different game".

According to Virendra Narain, the state of Pakistan which came into existence on the basis of religion

"was indeed a great setback to the cause of national liberation movement in the sub-continent". So far, so good. But it is difficult to understand him when he holds the view that the consequences of this for independent Pakistan were disastrous since religion could provide neither a viable basis nor legitimacy in the eyes of the people. For this suggests that the Pakistani people are itching to throw off their religion-garbed shackles to liberate themselves for a better future. But such is not the case. Indeed, the opposite unfortunately is acquiring the shape of truth.

Kalim Bahadur maintains that Zia's coup of July 1977 undid whatever constitutional progress Pakistan had registered during the last 30 years, so that "whenever the present Martial Law regime disappears, Pakistanis will have to get down once more to start afresh as they did in 1947".

#### IMPERIAL AID

Pandav Nayak in his separate paper says that militarism and imperial aid have bred get-rich-quick merchant traders who now control the Pakistani State. As for the political garb in which this control is exercised, "during the PNA agitation when the workers stopped the economy to a grinding halt, Bhutto chose to consult the leader of Islamic Orthodoxy and invite the generals rather than concede to the demands of the agitating workers. That is how authoritarian statism has come full circle". This is a correct view, since this kind of a vicious, authoritarian circle is doubling and trebling up in cyclic waves. Witness how the generals finally ate up Bhutto himself, which execution act has been rationalised by the mullahs and their fundamentalism.

Satish Kumar argues that federalism has become the worst casualty in the governance of Pakistan although federalism is essential to "maintain and promote unity and strength of a state with the trappings of its old society". Working on this same theme, Urmila Phadnis concludes that both Pathan and Baluch national

groups have suffered relative deprivation.

S.N. Kaushik's study of Bhutto's leadership suggests that "when a political leader loses self-confidence and clear-headed execution of his policies and pronouncements, he also loses an opportunity to consolidate civilian rule and, consequently, reliance on army top-brass and the bureaucracy increases in that proportion. That, as events have shown, has been the bane of Pakistan's politics". The valid lesson to be drawn therefore is that the authenticity of civilian political forces in Pakistan will have to be established before a popular regime can be restored and rehabilitated.

Ghazala Meenai discusses with competence the origin, ideology, programmes and their implementation, as well as the performance profile of the PPP. Results of the first ever general elections revealed that religious fundamentalism did not really hold any sway over the masses, since the three Islamic parties—JI, JUI, and JUP—together polled only 13.95% of the total. And the example of Baluchistan showed that political opposition could be disregarded and crushed only at Bhutto's own expense!

K.L. Kamal maintains that "Pakistan is fast on its way to becoming a garrison State where the military is permeating every walk of life". This is because the ruling generals there have a one-point programme, of survival, which is ensured by first consolidating absolute personal power and then creating political institutions to legitimise it.

Kamal Uddin Ahmed seeks the causes of the break-up of Pakistan in the economic disparities which were particularly accentuated during the sixties.

Aswini K. Ray, focusing on the political economy of foreign policy in general and that of Pakistan in particular, talks of the almost parallel development of a remarkable continuity in the social base of its ruling clique on the one hand, and in the broad contours of its foreign policy on the other. And according to Bhabani Sen Gupta, Pakistan's unrepresentative military rulers have arrogated to themselves the role of a frontline State for the



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strategic consensus objectives of American foreign policy—in callous disregard of public opinion at home, since one survey showed only 7.6% Pakistanis liking USA more than any other country.

In fact, Reagan Administration's hawkish decision to pump into Pakistan a massive military assistance amounting to a 3.2 billion dollar is an important security sinew of the western global strategy in South Asia. "This policy view includes the fostering of Islamic fundamentalism, such as that of the Zia regime and its backers in the Jamaat-e-Islami, as a bulwark against communism and an instrumentation of destabilization of the Islamic population of Soviet Central Asia".

#### INDO-PAK RELATIONS

The final view is that of Suren-dra Chopra, that the history of Indo-Pak relations has been bedevilled by perceptual divergences of the two parties. At the root of this psychological malaise lies the pre-partition parity syndrome which continues even today. The two countries have returned to the square one position after a brief interlude of relaxed tension in the aftermath of Pakistan's disintegration in 1971. He concludes that the latest round of relapse into the original psychological malaise has been effected through a step-by-step action-reaction pattern of response starting from the Pokharan implosion in May 1974.

As would be clear from the above, all the papers in this collection are mainly from the political point of view. There is no sociological approach to see why the Pakistanis are apparently unprotestingly trapped in the mesh of religious fundamentalism that is not all that popular. There is no economic approach to see how the poor in Pakistan fare in the face of the local-military/imperial-aid pincer which for three decades now made the country a mere extension of the U.S. foreign policy. Indeed, what is the state of the poor there, and is anyone mobilising them on economic issues? These are unfortunate lacunae which are, however, unavoidable since all the papers

were presented by political scientists.

All things considered, as said in the beginning, this is a book to be welcomed. In a situation of scarce interest and literature on our neighbours, this indeed is a book to

be grabbed by all thinking Indians. They will find it very interesting and thought-provoking.

*Alok Sinha, a member of the IAS, is currently Deputy Secretary in the Department of Environment.*

## Women in Tamil Literature

C. S. Lakshmi

*The Face Behind The Mask : Women in Tamil Literature*  
pp. 253, Vikas, Rs. 95.00

Reviewed by Kiran Devendra

The author has tried to look at the Tamil women through Tamil literature. While, on the one hand, literature is a reflection of a society, on the other hand it influences the minds of the people as a whole. It is clear from Lakshmi's work that Tamil society has been an orthodox society (this is true of Indian society in general). Clearly the majority of the writers tried to uphold the tradition. While men were doing it to ensure that women stayed within the traditional limits, women were doing it too. According to the author, the number of those authors who tried to be different in their approach and outlook was small; it was still smaller in the case of women writers. In fact, neither male nor female writers could give a new direction to Tamil literature, comments Lakshmi. The traditional writings in this study make it quite clear that women remained submissive and obedient. For Tamil Hindu woman, marriage, husband, home, chastity were most important. Bold and assertive images of women are disliked as they were a misfit in the Tamil culture. Even if left on their own, women would not resist the forced images because of the fear of being rejected/unwanted.

The author has given examples from literature to show the prevalence of social evils in Tamil society like a three years old widow crying for her mother when teased by her friends. This has been intelligently done to serve as an example of two social evils—child marriage and enforced widowhood.

Most of Tamil writings included in the work give the impression that

only those women who have preserved their culture have been happy. There is, however, a marked contradiction in Tamil literature in regard to its outlook towards women: one can find a lot of respect being given to a traditional Tamil woman, at the same time this literature abounds in jokes on women.

#### SOCIAL CONTEXT

A little change was noticed in the region (you could hardly call it a change) for it was confined only to women (affluent) going to parties and being introduced to other people. Despite the fact that Mrs. Beasant and Margaret Cousins worked in this region, it was not easy to change the society. Each attempt was suspected to be an effort to modernise the traditional society. Men resented it, Brahmins resented it and, therefore, no serious attempt was made to bring about reforms. Political leaders ignored the issue, saying that if the cause of women was taken up first, Swaraj would be delayed. In Madras there was a strong reaction to Sarda Bill and also to Devadasi Bill. The Devadasi system was defended by the politicians as it was linked up with religion and its continuation was considered to be necessary for the preservation of art.

Women were discriminated against in education. Subjects like Mathematics and Science were branded as men's subjects. Even Gandhi did not wish women to study English. This must be probed



deeper. While Gandhi gets the credit of brining out women from their homes to participate in the freedom struggle, the author hints that he did not allow participation till they had obtained their husbands' consent. This can be positively interpreted in the sense that those women who had the consent were more confident and tension-free than the ones who could not manage it. For women, coming out of homes was a change; it could surely be more meaningful if it was supported by the family. This I hope, certainly, did not mean that Gandhi did not have confidence in Indian women.

Lakshmi agrees that due to education women's position has improved and that modernisation is on its way in Tamil Nadu. To accept this and to give an example of a survey on widow remarriage is a contradiction. If such a survey is carried out anywhere in the country, it could be more negative because Indian society still has not accepted widow remarriage. This alone cannot be an indicator of modernisation.

#### TRADITIONAL WRITERS

Coming back to Tamil literature, the earlier stories had morals—they were so lengthy that most often the authors lost track of what they were doing. Vedanakam is a traditionalist. All his works, *Pratapa Mudaliar*, *Charitram* and *Suguna Sundari Charitram*, are full of traditional tones. *Madhavayyar* is different, feels the author, probably because he has taken up the social problems of women (Muthulakshmi could be taken as an example).

The traditional writers popularised fiction in the market. Only a few non-traditionalists wrote differently and, of course, boldly. Some of them were first to recognise sex as a biological need for women; the earlier concept was that it was woman's duty to satisfy man's urge.

Most of the works had humor at the cost of women. Lakshmi observes that this never offended the women as they never raised their voice against it.

Journals by men suggested

various things to women. Journals by women repeated it. Lakshmi feels that it is difficult to differentiate between male and female writings because of an identical approach—glorifying traditional womanhood.

Cinema had some influence on contemporary writing. Many began to write for cinema. Most of the works became popular because they were to be screened.

Lakshmi also feels that some women writers began to write differently. Sundara Ramaswami began to take up social images in his works. Poonami wrote about woman agricultural workers, Saroja Ramamoorthy also wrote differently.

#### NON-TRADITIONALISTS

The author rightly feels that the non-traditionalists did not become very popular. Most of the journals did not publish their writings because they were not acceptable to the traditional mould of the society. They did not write for money/market. To keep up with their standard they could only write for a few journals. They wrote differently, struggled against the society and the traditionalists. They struggled to earn fame and tried to get awards and recognition. How could the writers set a new trend or give a new direction to literature when most of them were feeding the popular market, making money and only a few cared for the standards? While the non-traditionalists few were fighting to create new images of women to replace the old, forced stereotyped images of women, a flux of literature came to counter the new images in support of the old images.

The author has done a good job of interviewing a number of women writers. The purpose, of course, was to know them as persons. Lakshmi has to some extent succeeded in proving that a writer's personality, problems, background gets written into his or her writing, directly or indirectly. Moreover, most of the women authors who have interviewed are traditional in their outlook and approach. They blindly support the tradition and uphold it. Only a few were rational. In one of the works, a sick woman

wished to touch her husband's feet before dying—the husband stood on a bench so that she could do it. Many are conservative because of cultural limitations, a few started writing differently as a reaction to strong conservative environment.

How far has Lakshmi succeeded in removing the mask? Not really as many were not frank, some refused to face the interview, some not prepared even to answer the questionnaire. Others spoke cautiously and preferred to wear the mask. The reviewer feels that out of a big number, a very small number of women writers came out of the mask. This could have been due to the fact that women writers had got used to it and accepted it. By doing so they tried to sleep over their identity and individuality.

Lakshmi writes differently because she struggled against financial odds. She saw for herself what her widowed grandmother went through. She came up as a writer due to her determination. She worked hard to be a doctor. Her first story was of a widow. She has working women as her heroines. Other women authors, went to the extent of saying that it was pointless to discuss widow's problems as they had got used to their misery.

#### DRIFT FROM TRADITION

Saroja Ramamoorthy defied the social norms in her marriage and had a civil marriage. In one of her stories, the husband misses his wife after her death, not as a wife but as a cook, remarks Lakshmi.

Jyoti Latha Girija is also a little different. She does not consider marriage as the only important thing for a woman. She wrote on bold themes. There has however been a certain measure of facelessness in Tamil writing since 1950.

Lakshmi repeatedly feels that most of the women writers were against freedom, westernisation and urbanisation as all these made women drift away from tradition. It is because of this that modern women, working women, women in love, women who are not sincere to their husbands/families are viewed as women by the authors and they are punished for not being within the cultural limits. Since



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marriage and home are of the greatest significance, therefore only a sincere wife, mother, daughter and daughter-in-law are glorified.

As far as the problems of women are concerned, for instance, women suffering at the hands of their in-laws, women writers have not totally ignored it. The fact that they cling to home and family all the time makes them feel that their problems would be resolved when homes would be humanised. Lakshmi finds most of them in favour of Tamil women's code. There are very few exceptions. The best heroines are the all-woman types who sacrifice everything and live only for husband and family. Anything that is against tradition (inter-caste marriage, love marriage, freedom loving women) is viewed negatively by the woman authors, observes Lakshmi. Male superiority is not only accepted but defended. Humility is always meant for the wife. A wife even if more talented or capable than her husband cannot throw a retort at him. In one of the stories a man marries his boss to become superior.

Lakshmi feels that only a few women writers have tried bold and assertive images of women, despite the fact that both these are looked down as negative qualities in a woman. Most authors show their heroines wanting to help their younger brothers and sisters after the death of their fathers. In yet another work a working woman leaves her husband when he refused to keep her brothers. Both the themes are different but far from reality. In most of the works, love has been depicted as a pure emotion. Due to the impact of the cinema, sometimes authors show the lovers meeting each other but because tradition is so important, the moment an advance is made, the good heroines run away.

#### REGIONAL THEMES

Lakshmi points out that while most of the works had love, marriage, motherhood, chastity as their themes, women writers also took up regional themes and themes of nationalism. Rajam Krishnan and Hephzibah Jesudan have taken up the regional themes frequently.

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There is however a basic difference between the two for Rajam Krishnan change is bad as it takes away old values, but for Hephzibah Jesudan change is good as it replaces the old values by new ones. Rajam Krishnan has also written on nationalism. So has Kodainayaki. Many women authors have introduced Gandhi. (During their interviews with the author, several of them showed great respect for Gandhi. Many more were involved in the national movement directly and other times indirectly).

Why have the Tamil women writers not come out of the traditional hold? It could be because in all cases, the writers' domestic role as a woman gets a priority. Moreover if a cursory glance is made at the literature of other regions, we do come across similarities. For example, even in Bengal (which was the first province to be conquered by the British) non-traditional writings are not easily acceptable.

Women writers have hardly ever been considered good when compared to men writers despite the fact that both in Bengal and in Tamil Nadu, literature, journals, magazines banked heavily on women's serialised writings.

#### WEARING THE MASK

The reviewer feels that when one writes in one's own language, one tends to get traditional-keeping in mind the local traditional readers. Another reason could be that even if one does not want to, one has to wear the mask because the number of readers in a particular language is limited and the authors are easily recognised. They consider it safe to wear a mask because of the inhibitions. But if the same writer was to write in English, he/she would be free, can afford to tear away the mask because the readers are also faceless. It would, therefore, mean that social psychology plays a strong role in the works of authors. In one's native language one has to be within the social morality of the cultural surroundings.

Very few authors have had the courage to come out of their cultural milieu in spite of modernisation because on the face of it, change and modernisation have been super-

ficial and unreal, it has failed to go deeper in our value system. Not only this, change has been uneven.

Before we look at the Tamil women writers more harshly for not being successful in setting a trend, we will have to remember that even man writers could not do it due to the society's structure which has been traditional to its very core. The fact that Tamil women writers did not resist the forced images could be because they wanted to at least be allowed to continue writing in a male-dominated society. And then have not the ideas of dominant groups always acted as a blanket coverage over the ideas of the muted groups. Women during the Victorian period in England manipulated a particular classification/categorisation by men rather than opposing the same. To make their ideas known, women had to articulate in a manner which was acceptable to men. The fact that so many women writers have joined the main stream of writers is incredible.

Lakshmi's work is a good survey of Tamil writing, its attitude towards women, the attitude of women authors themselves. It is informative, well documented and a welcome addition to women/literature theme. It could be made more interesting if a comparison of women authors in other regional literatures could also be made. The book is well edited, it has few mistakes. Though the book makes an interesting general reading, it could also be useful for future research. A bibliography, if provided, would have been welcome.

*Kiran Devendra is Research Associate in the Nehru Museum sponsored project entitled Emancipation of Women.*

## Books Received

Joshi, Chand. Bhindranwale: Myth and Reality. Delhi, Vikas, 1984. vi, 168 p. Rs. 50.00.

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